

Pearls from the Prophets

Ezekiel Summary

2024 - 2024

“Teacher” - Heard Lowry

**Most of Christian history
has largely put the cart of requirements
before the “horsepower” itself,
thinking that loads of carts,
or “I have the best cart,”
will eventually produce the horse.
It never does.**

Richard Rohr

Where did a prophet prophesy (with a demonstration) in Egypt?

When Jeremiah had finished telling the people all the words of the LORD their God ... had sent him to tell them ... all the arrogant men said to Jeremiah, "You are lying! The LORD our God has not sent you to say, 'You must not go to Egypt to settle there.'

So ... all the people disobeyed the LORD's command to stay in the land of Judah. Instead, ... they took Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch son of Neriah along with them [and] entered Egypt in disobedience to the LORD and went as far as Tahpanhes.

In Tahpanhes the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: "While the Jews are watching, take some large stones with you and bury them in clay in the brick pavement at the entrance to Pharaoh's palace in Tahpanhes. Then say to them, 'This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: I will send for my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and ... He will come and attack Egypt, bringing death to those destined for death, captivity to those destined for captivity, and the sword to those destined for the sword. He will set fire to the temples of the gods of Egypt; he will burn their temples and take their gods captive.

We must not lose the “edges” of God’s stories

**Speaking of surprises,
here’s a problem with the Gospels:
we’ve heard some of the stories so many times
that it’s easy to overlook their overriding strangeness.
We’ve lost the ability to be surprised by them.
They become like old coins,
their edges smoothed away.**

James Martin

**Are they ashamed of their detestable conduct?
No, they have no shame at all;
they do not even know how to blush.**

[from PDE]

**[they have forgotten]
Jeremiah 6:15a and 8:12a**

Regular Pre-Class Components

- Prayer List
 - Quote
 - Research or Thought Question
 - Comment from a Previous Class or Parallel
 - Review of the Purpose of the Class
 - Interesting Note Concerning Prophecy
 - Example of Poor Prophecy – when available
 - Interpretation of Scripture / Seeing the Connections
 - Prophecy Pointing to Christ (may be deferred to later in the lesson)
- } used in past lessons

As we pursue this textual study,
let us not forget David's lesson on putting our faith into action.

To study the impact of the Prophets on the Christ –
Looking for “Pearls”



In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.

The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. Hebrews 1:1-4

The prophets paved the path to establish Jesus as the Christ.

Their writings were the foundation
of the Jew’s understanding of God’s plan.

Interesting Notes

One of my college professors listed what he called three important results of the exile –

- (1) a thorough purging of idolatrous rituals in worship and acceptance of monotheism,**
- (2) the rise of synagogues as teaching institutions, and**
- (3) a deeper longing for their Messiah.**

Fred M. McLaren

The Pharisees and Sadducees indeed created a more structured and non-idolatrous environment.

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

Prophecy of David, as quoted by people... (1)

[When Abner was ready to give Israel over to David]

Abner conferred with the elders of Israel and said,

“For some time you have wanted to make David your king.

Now do it!

For the Lord promised David,

‘By my servant David

I will rescue my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines
and from the hand of all their enemies.’”

2 Samuel 3:17-18

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

Prophecy of David, as quoted by people... (2)

[David Becomes King Over Israel]

All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said,
“We are your own flesh and blood.

In the past, while Saul was king over us,
you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns.

And the Lord said to you,
‘You will shepherd my people Israel,
and you will become their ruler.’”

2 Samuel 5:1-2

Picking the Pearls

Pointing to the Christ

And so the wrath and judgment of God
visited on Jerusalem in 587 BC,
and the grace and redemption of God
that raised the people to new life again,
both found their ultimate expression and saving power
when Jesus

**‘died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures...
and was raised on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures’.**

Christopher J. H. Wright

- Introduction
- Information on the Prophets
- **Seeing the Connections**
- Picking the Pearls
 - Isaiah
 - Jeremiah
 - Ezekiel
 - Amos
 - Hosea
 - Zechariah
 - Malachi

- Conclusion

Seeing the Connections

Why Study the Prophets?

Reading the book The Gospel according to God, by John F. MacArthur, made me realize how meaningful the prophecy of Isaiah is to the fact of Jesus being the Christ (our Savior).

Particularly chapters 52-53, even considering a contemporary meaning – this points to the powerful love of a suffering Savior.

The book of Isaiah is sometimes called the “fifth Gospel.”

John F. MacArthur

The evidence of copies of the book of Isaiah from the Dead Sea Scrolls that are dated long before the time of Christ give tremendous weight to the prophetic message.

Picking the Pearls

Prophetic Verses Applied to Christ in the New Testament

Amos 9:11-12	in	Acts 15:16-18
Hosea 1:10	in	Romans 9:26
Hosea 2:23	in	Romans 9:25
Hosea 11:1	in	Matthew 2:15
Hosea 13:14	in	1 Corinthians 15:55
Isaiah 1:9	in	Romans 9:29
Isaiah 6:9-10	in	Matthew 13:14-15, John 12:39-41, Acts 28:26-27
Isaiah 7:14	in	Matthew 1:23
Isaiah 8:14	in	1 Peter 2:8
Isaiah 8:18	in	Hebrews 2:13
Isaiah 9:1-2	in	Matthew 4:15-16
Isaiah 10:22-23	in	Romans 9:27-28
Isaiah 11:10	in	Romans 15:12

from John T. Willis

Pearls of Great Price

**Again,
the kingdom of heaven is like
a merchant looking for fine pearls.**

**When he found one of great value,
he went away
and sold everything he had
and bought it.**

Matthew 13:45-46

**In our study of the prophets and their messages,
we will be hunting for Pearls
that are of immense value!**

Seeing the Connections

My List of Special Prophetic Themes

- **impotent idols**
- **stretching out the heavens**
- **the blind and deaf**
- **water in the desert**
- **no other God**
- **light for the Gentiles**
- **God will save a remnant**
- **renewal and regrowth**
- **the Messiah (Christ)**

Picking the Pearls

Introduction – OT Passages Quoted by Christ (1)

Gen. 1:27

Gen. 2:24

Ex. 3:6

Ex. 20:12

Ex. 20:13–16 Deut. 5:17–20

Ex. 21:17; Lev. 20:9

Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20

Lev. 19:18

Deut. 6:4

Deut. 6:5; 10:12; 30:6

Deut. 6:13; 10:20

Deut. 6:16

Deut. 8:3

Deut. 17:6; 19:15

Ps. 6:8

Ps. 8:2

Ps. 22:1

Ps. 31:5

Ps. 35:19; 69:4

Ps. 37:11

Ps. 41:9

Ps. 82:6

Ps. 110:1

Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6

Matt. 19:5; Mark 10:7–8

Matt. 22:32; Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37

Matt. 15:4; 19:19 Mark 7:10; 10:19; Luke 18:20

Matt. 19:18; Luke 18:20; Mark 10:19

Matt. 15:4; Mark 7:10

Matt. 5:38

Matt. 5:43; 19:19; 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27

Mark 12:29

Matt. 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27

Matt. 4:10; Luke 4:8

Matt. 4:7; Luke 4:12

Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4

Matt. 18:16; John 8:17

Matt. 7:23; Luke 13:27

Matt. 21:16

Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34

Luke 23:46

John 15:25

Matt. 5:5

John 13:18

John 10:34

Matt. 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42–43

10 commandments

Great
Commandments

temptations

on the cross

Picking the Pearls

Introduction – OT Passages Quoted by Christ (2)

Ps. 118:22–23

Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10–11; Luke 20:17

Ps. 118:26

Matt. 23:39; Luke 13:35

Isa. 6:9–10

Matt. 13:14–15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40

Isa. 13:10

Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:24–25

Isa. 29:13

Matt. 15:8–9; Mark 7:6–7

Isa. 35:5–6

Matt. 11:5; Luke 7:22

Isa. 53:12

Luke 22:37

re: suffering servant Messiah

Isa. 54:13

John 6:45

Isa. 56:7

Matt. 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46

Isa. 61:1–2

Luke 4:18–19

Isa. 66:24

Mark 9:44, 46, 48

“I am He”

Jer. 7:11

Matt. 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46

Jer. 22:5

Matt. 23:38; Luke 13:35

Dan. 7:13

Matt. 16:28; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27

Dan. 9:27

Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14

Dan. 12:3

Matt. 13:43

Hosea 6:6

Matt. 9:13; 12:7

mercy

Hosea 10:8

Luke 23:30

Jonah 1:17

Matt. 12:40

Micah 7:6

Matt. 10:35–36

Zech. 13:7

Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:27

Mal. 3:1

Matt. 11:10; Luke 7:27

prepare the way

45 total passages
from 13 books
none of the History books, only
Pentateuch (all but Numbers),
Psalms,
and the Prophets (8 of 17)

Picking the Pearls

Introduction – Christ speaks of “fulfilling” the Prophecy

- 1) **Matthew 3:15; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.”**
- 2) **Matthew 5:17; “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.**
- 3) **Matthew 13:14; In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: “‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.**
- 4) **Matthew 26:54; But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?”**
- 5) **Matthew 26:56; But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.”**
- 6) **Mark 14:49; Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.”**
- 7) **Luke 4:21; He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”**
- 8) **Luke 18:31; “We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled.**
- 9) **Luke 21:22; For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written.**
- 10) **Luke 21:24; Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.**
- 11) **Luke 22:37; It is written: ‘And he was numbered with the transgressors’; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment.”**
- 12) **Luke 24:44; Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”**
- 13) **John 13:18; But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: ‘He who shared my bread has turned against me.’**
- 14) **John 15:25; But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’**
- 15) **John 17:12; None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.**

Picking the Pearls

Introduction – NT Quotations of Isaiah

Matthew:	9	(7:14, 40:3, 9:1, 53:4, 42:1, 42:4, 6:9, 29:13, 56:7)
Mark:	6	(40:3, 6:9, 29:13, 66:24, 56:7, 53:12)
Luke:	7	(42:6, 49:6, 40:3, 61:1, 6:9, 56:7, 53:12)
John:	4	(40:3, 54:13, 53:1, 6:10)
Acts:	5	(66:1, 53:7, 55:3, 49:6, 6:9)
Romans:	19	(52:5, 59:7-8, 29:16, 10:22, 1:9, 8:14, 28:16, 52:7, 53:1, 10:20, 65:1, 65:2, 29:10, 59:20, 27:9, 40:13, 45:23, 42:4, 11:10, 52:15)
1 Corinthians:	5	(29:14, 64:4, 28:11, 22:13, 25:8)
2 Corinthians:	2	(49:8, 52:11)
Galatians:	1	(54:1)
Ephesians:	2	(11:5, 59:17)
Hebrews:	1	(8:17-18)
1 Peter:	6	(40:6, 28:16, 8:14, 53:9, 53:5, 8:12)
Revelation:	1	(22:22)

Picking the Pearls

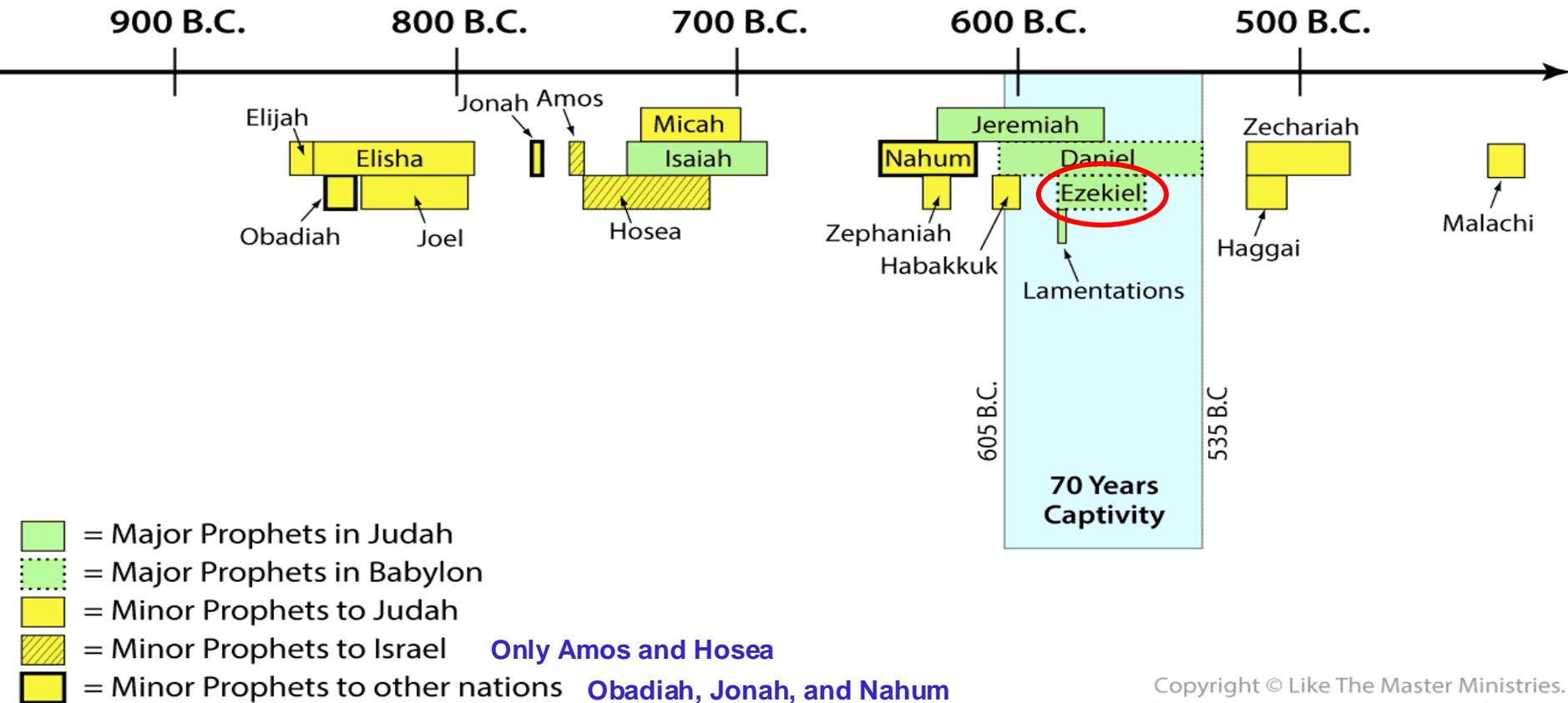
Introduction – NT Quotations of Jeremiah

Jeremiah 6:16	Matthew 11:29; walk in the good ways
Jeremiah 5:21	Mark 8:18 those who are blind
Jeremiah 7:11	Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46; God's house became a den of robbers
Jeremiah 9:23-24	1 Corinthians 1:31; 2 Corinthians 10:17; Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom
Jeremiah 10:7	Revelation 15:3-4; no one as wise as God
Jeremiah 12:3	James 5:5; God examines our hearts
Jeremiah 12:15	Acts 15:16; God will bring a remnant back
Jeremiah 22:24	Romans 14:11; a signet ring pulled off
Jeremiah 31:15	Matthew 2:18; Rachel is weeping for her children
Jeremiah 31:31-34	Heb 8:8-12; Heb 10:16-17; Rom 11:26; a new covenant, and a law written on our hearts

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- **Ezekiel**
 - Introduction
 - Finding the Pearls

Interesting Notes – Major and Minor Testament Prophets



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**[some] prophets had international ministry.
Elisha and Elijah were both involved with kings of other nations.
Christopher J.H. Wright**

Picking the Pearls

Introduction – NT Quotations from or Allusions to Ezekiel

... that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them.
Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God. Ezekiel 11:20

“My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. Ezekiel 37:27

refer to 2 Corinthians 6:16 and Hebrews 8:10

“Thus says the Lord God to these bones, ‘Behold, I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life. Ezekiel 37:5

So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. Ezekiel 37:10

see Revelation 11:11

It is interesting to note that Jesus evidently never quoted from Ezekiel.

Also Jesus never quoted the “my people” passage directly.

Picking the Pearls

Introduction to Ezekiel

From our previous study

**we would expect a somewhat loosely organized compilation
of messages, anecdotes and first-person memoirs,
touched up and supplemented here and there
by the notes and additions of later editors and readers...**

The Book of Ezekiel,

**with the sole exception of verse 1:2-3,
is made up entirely of prophetic first-person reports
and nothing else!**

John W. Miller

Picking the Pearls

Introduction to Ezekiel

... the book falls neatly into four sections, in roughly chronological order.

- 1) The first twenty-four chapters record the prophet's words and actions between his dramatic call to be God's spokesman in 493 B.C. and the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C., a period of six years.
- 2) Then come eight chapters (25-32) of oracles against neighboring nations which had either helped to bring about Judah's downfall or maliciously rejoiced in her destruction.
- 3) A new note of hope for the future appears in ch. 33 and until the end of ch. 39 there is a collection of Ezekiel's words of encouragement and promise of the rebirth of God's people after their time of discipline in exile is over.
- 4) Finally in chs. 40-48 there is the prophet's detailed plan for the re-establishment of the faith in Jerusalem, the rebuilding of the Temple and the restoration of the true relationship between Israel and her God, which her long tale of betrayal and folly over the centuries had well-nigh destroyed.

Picking the Pearls

Introduction to Ezekiel

The Book of Ezekiel

is one of the most chronologically ordered books of the Bible.

Mark Rooker

Ezekiel's book is unique among the prophetic books of the Bible
by being arranged in almost perfect chronological order.

... fourteen date references...

Christopher Wright

Picking the Pearls

Interesting Notes for Ezekiel

... had it not been for Ezekiel
there would have been no return from exile.
Judah would have disappeared from the scene
as the ten tribes of Israel had done before.

William Neil

Picking the Pearls

Formula: “They (You) will Know the Lord”

**This expression is an adaptation
of what is called the “recognition formula”
characteristic of the prophecy of Ezekiel.**

**The full formula
“and they will know that I am the LORD,”
occurs ninety-two times
in the Book of Ezekiel.**

Mark Rooker

**The expression ‘Then you will know that I am Yahweh’
is virtually the signature of Ezekiel. ...**

**It occurs more than seventy times in the book
and has been the focus of much scholarly study...**

Christopher Wright

- **Ezekiel**
 - Introduction
 - Finding the Pearls

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel chapter 1

In Ezekiel 1:3 we learn that his name was Ezekiel son of Buzi.

“Ezekiel” is a compound of the Hebrew verb

“to strengthen’ (haza) and “God” (‘el), signifying “God strengthens.”

... In 24:24 we read that “thus Ezekiel is a **sign** for you.”

That is the only other time this name occurs
either in this book or elsewhere in the Bible.

John Miller

‘**May God strengthen him.**’

This was the prayer

with which **Ezekiel’s** parents

launched their newborn son into the world
when they named him.

Christopher J. H. Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel chapter 1

**It was 622 BC –
an auspicious year to be born,
from the point of view of the family of priests in Jerusalem
into which Ezekiel arrived.**

**It was the year
in which the book of the law was discovered in the temple,
adding urgency and impetus to the reforms
which King Josiah was already instigating
in the kingdom of Judah.**

Christopher J. H. Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel chapter 1

**Ezekiel, son of Buzi,
was among the ten thousand citizens of Jerusalem
deported to Babylon
when King Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem in 598/ 597 B.C.
(2 Kgs. 24:10-17).**

**Ezekiel's call to be a prophet occurred five years later
(the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile), in the year 593,
while he was living at Tel-abib near the Chebar River in Babylon.**

**He received his call at the age of thirty (Ezek. 1:1),
the year he should have begun his duties as a priest (Num. 4:3).**

Mark Rooker

It was his thirtieth birthday, and he was the son of Buzi, the priest.

According to Numbers 4,

**Levites were eligible for their sacred work
between the ages of thirty and fifty.**

Christopher Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel chapter 1

This event is usually called the first deportation.

It took place in 597 BC.

**And it included Ezekiel,
a young trainee priest aged twenty-five. ...**

**it was then,
five years after the first deportation,
that God intervened dramatically in Ezekiel's life,
commissioned him to speak his word
and sent him to his own people there in exile.**

Christopher J. H. Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel chapter 1

**Only when we have begun to realize
how deeply rooted Ezekiel was
in the priestly traditions of Jerusalem
can we begin to appreciate
what it must have meant for him to be uprooted from the temple there
and taken a thousand miles away to the banks of the Chebar
on the outskirts of Babylon.**

John Miller

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel chapter 1

Since the thirtieth year
was to mark Ezekiel's inauguration into the priesthood,
one can only imagine the disappointment he must have felt.

In the year he was to carry out his priestly functions,
he sat as a captive in Babylon.

Mark Rooker

Ezekiel was perhaps the “wildest” prophet of them all.

Picking the Pearls

“Know the Lord”

“The Word of the LORD Came to Me” (3:16)

**This phrase occurs forty-nine times in Ezekiel
and twenty-eight times in Jeremiah,
reporting a revelation experience
by way of introducing a prophecy.**

**The phrase also occurs in the prophetic narratives of Samuel-Kings,
being said of**

- 1) Samuel (1 Sam. 15:10),**
- 2) Nathan (2 Sam. 7:4),**
- 3) Gad (2 Sam. 24:11),**
- 4) the Bethel prophet (1 Kgs. 13:20),**
- 5) Jehu (1 Kgs. 16:1),**
- 6) Elijah (1 Kgs. 17:2,8; 18:1; 21:17,28),**
- 7) and Isaiah (2 Kgs. 20:4; cp. Isa. 38:4).**

Mark Rooker

Picking the Pearls

“Know the Lord”

... and you will know that I am the LORD (Ezek. 6:10,13,14).

This phrase, which occurs sixty times in Ezekiel
to close different sections of the book,
is known as the recognition formula.

Mark Rooker

Picking the Pearls

Citing Scripture

**A final characteristic of the Book of Ezekiel
is the citation of previously written Scripture.**

**This is evident in the judgment oracles of Ezekiel 4-5
that depend heavily on the curses listed in Leviticus 26.**

**Ezekiel is also aware of other portions of canonical Scripture,
including**

**Numbers 18:1-7,22-23 (Ezek. 44:9-16) and
Zephaniah 3:1-4 (Ezek. 22:25-29).**

Mark Rooker

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 1

[Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision]

In my thirtieth year,
in the fourth month on the fifth day,
while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River,
the heavens were opened
and I saw visions of God.

On the fifth of the month —
it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin —
the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel the priest,
the son of Buzi,
by the Kebar River in the land of the Babylonians.

There the hand of the Lord was on him.

Ezekiel 1:1-3

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 1

[Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision]

I looked, and I saw a windstorm coming out of the north —
an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light.

The center of the fire looked like glowing metal,
and in the fire was what looked like four living creatures.

In appearance their form was human,
but each of them had four faces and four wings.

Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf
and gleamed like burnished bronze.

Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands.

All four of them had faces and wings,
and the wings of one touched the wings of another.

Each one went straight ahead;
they did not turn as they moved.

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 1

[Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision]

Their faces looked like this:

**Each of the four had the face of a human being,
and on the right side each had the face of a lion,
and on the left the face of an ox;
each also had the face of an eagle.**

Such were their faces.

Ezekiel 1:10-11a

This was an incredibly awesome vision!

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 1

The four faces represented the highest forms of life to be found among the different realms of God's creation:

- 1) **man** as supreme came first and faced forwards;
- 2) the **lion** and
- 3) the **ox** were the kings among wild beasts and domestic animals (what the writer of Genesis 1 calls 'cattle' and 'beasts of the earth');
- 4) and the **eagle** was the chief of the birds of the air.

The creeping things and the fishes of the sea were not represented!

John B. Taylor

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 1

[Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision]

As I looked at the living creatures,
I saw a wheel on the ground beside each creature with its four faces.

This was the appearance and structure of the wheels:
They sparkled like topaz,
and all four looked alike.

Each appeared to be made
like a wheel intersecting a wheel.

As they moved,
they would go in any one of the four directions the creatures faced;
the wheels did not change direction as the creatures went.

Their rims were high and awesome,
and all four rims were full of eyes all around.

Ezekiel 1:11b-14

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 1

The living creatures formed a square and,
as each faced outwards with its human face,
the effect of this symmetrical pattern was that
whichever way one looked at the four creatures,
a different face was seen from each
and so all four faces were visible at the same time from any angle.

The one nearest to the viewer would be showing as a **man**,
the one on the left would face him as an **ox**,
the one on the right as a **lion**,
and the creature at the rear would be showing its **eagle's** appearance.

John B. Taylor

A quick look on the internet shows the great difficulty
Of creating a meaningful image of this vision.

Related to the Search for God...

**Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the author of The Little Prince,
succinctly encapsulates the motive power of such allure:**

**“If you want to build a ship,” he counsels,
“don’t drum up people to collect wood
and don’t assign them tasks and work,
but rather teach them to long for
the endless immensity of the sea.”**

James K. A. Smith

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 1 - Parallel

[Epiphanies – visions of God]

- **Jacob saw God at Peniel and his life was changed. He was no longer known as Jacob, but from then on his name was Israel.**
- **Moses went up on Mount Sinai and communed with God face-to-face. This was an experience that changed his countenance and shaped his life. Isaiah saw the glory of the Lord in the sanctuary, and his entire ministry was filled with the beauty of the Lord's holiness.**
- **Paul saw the risen and glorified Redeemer on the Damascus road and was blinded temporarily. This encounter transformed Paul from the great persecutor of the church to one of its greatest preachers.**
 [also his view of the third heaven...]
- **John saw visions of the glorious unfolding of God's program for Christ, the church, and all the redeemed.**
- **In the midst of exile, Ezekiel saw visions of the glory of the Lord of Israel. This revelation shaped his life and ministry from that time forward.**

Mark Rooker

The Impact of Story – Being Cautious (Disney)

This program includes negative depictions and/or mistreatment of people or cultures. These stereotypes were wrong then and are wrong now. Rather than remove this content, we want to acknowledge its harmful impact, learn from it and spark conversation to create a more inclusive future together.

Disney is committed to creating stories with inspirational and aspirational themes that reflect the rich diversity of the human experience around the globe.

To learn more about how stories have impacted society visit: www.Disney.com/StoriesMatter

Stories shape how we see ourselves and everyone around us. So as storytellers, we have the power and responsibility to not only uplift and inspire, but also consciously, purposefully and relentlessly champion the spectrum of voices and perspectives in our world.

As part of our ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion, we are in the process of reviewing our library and adding advisories to content that includes negative depictions or mistreatment of people or cultures. Rather than removing this content, we see an opportunity to spark conversation and open dialogue on history that affects us all. We also want to acknowledge that some communities have been erased or forgotten altogether, and we're committed to giving voice to their stories as well.

Interesting Notes

One of my college professors listed what he called three important results of the exile –

- (1) a thorough purging of idolatrous rituals in worship and acceptance of monotheism,**
- (2) the rise of synagogues as teaching institutions, and**
- (3) a deeper longing for their Messiah.**

Fred M. McLaren

The Pharisees and Sadducees indeed created a more structured and non-idolatrous environment.

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

Prophecy of David, as quoted by people... (1)

[When Abner was ready to give Israel over to David]

Abner conferred with the elders of Israel and said,

“For some time you have wanted to make David your king.

Now do it!

For the Lord promised David,

‘By my servant David

I will rescue my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines
and from the hand of all their enemies.’”

2 Samuel 3:17-18

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

Prophecy of David, as quoted by people... (2)

[David Becomes King Over Israel]

All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said,
“We are your own flesh and blood.

In the past, while Saul was king over us,
you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns.

And the Lord said to you,
‘You will shepherd my people Israel,
and you will become their ruler.’”

2 Samuel 5:1-2

Picking the Pearls

Pointing to the Christ

And so the wrath and judgment of God
visited on Jerusalem in 587 BC,
and the grace and redemption of God
that raised the people to new life again,
both found their ultimate expression and saving power
when Jesus

**‘died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures...
and was raised on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures’.**

Christopher J. H. Wright

Picking the Pearls

Notes so far...

**Ezekiel born in 622 BC, the year law was discovered in the temple
He was among ten thousand deported to Babylon in 598/597 BC
He was called to be a prophet five years later, at the age of thirty
He received “the word of the Lord” and emphasized “knowing the Lord”
In his inaugural vision, the heavens opened and he saw a vision of God
The hand of the Lord was on him.**

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 1

[Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision – summary so far]

A windstorm, with an immense cloud with flashing lightning and brilliant light. The center of the fire looked like glowing metal, and in the fire was what looked like four living human-like creatures with four faces and four wings.

Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved.

Each of the four had the face of a human being, a lion, an ox, and an eagle.

The wheels were complicated and sparkled; they moved in any direction.

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 1

[Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision]

They each had two wings spreading out upward,
each wing touching that of the creature on either side;
and each had two other wings covering its body.

Each one went straight ahead.

Wherever the spirit would go,
they would go,
without turning as they went.

The appearance of the living creatures
was like burning coals of fire or like torches.

Fire moved back and forth among the creatures;
it was bright, and lightning flashed out of it.

The creatures sped back and forth
like flashes of lightning.

Ezekiel 1:15-18

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 1

In Isaiah 6 the seraphim had six wings,
two of which were used to cover the face in adoration,
two to cover the feet in modesty
and with the other two they flew.

In Ezekiel there was no need for movement
and the motionless outstretched wings
simply served as supports
for the platform above.

John B. Taylor

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 1

[Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision]

When the living creatures moved,
the wheels beside them moved;
and when the living creatures rose from the ground,
the wheels also rose.

Wherever the spirit would go,
they would go,
and the wheels would rise along with them,
because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.

When the creatures moved, they also moved;
when the creatures stood still,
they also stood still;
and when the creatures rose from the ground,
the wheels rose along with them,
because the spirit of the living creatures
was in the wheels.

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 1

[Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision]

Spread out above the heads of the living creatures
was what looked something like a vault,
sparkling like crystal,
and awesome.

Under the vault their wings were stretched out one toward the other,
and each had two wings covering its body.

When the creatures moved,
I heard the sound of their wings,
like the roar of rushing waters,
like the voice of the Almighty,
like the tumult of an army.

When they stood still, they lowered their wings.

Ezekiel 1:22-24

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 1

[Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision]

Then there came a voice from above the vault over their heads
as they stood with lowered wings.

Above the vault over their heads was what looked like a throne of lapis lazuli,
and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man.

I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up
he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire,
and that from there down he looked like fire;
and brilliant light surrounded him.

Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day,
so was the radiance around him.

This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.

When I saw it, I fell facedown,
and I heard the voice of one speaking.

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 1

[Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision]

The vision is very difficult to render as an image,
as it was complex beyond our human imagination.

It is hard to believe that this came
just from the mind of Ezekiel.

... his description of the four-headed, winged cherubim would have been familiar to any inhabitant of ancient Mesopotamia surrounded by the great statues of tutelary deities guarding temple entrances and other polymorphous sky-bearing creatures that supported the thrones of the deities.

Christopher Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 1

The vision of God's glory (1:4–28) ...

The vision begins with a storm (4) and ends with a throne (26).

It has thereby combined two very powerful theophany traditions that are found in Israel's worship.

One describes Yahweh as 'riding on the wings of the storm', and includes such features as strong wind and lightning.

The other describes him as 'enthroned above the cherubim', or simply as seated on a throne above a heavenly platform.

The combination of both kinds of theophanic imagery into **one massive multimedia experience** must have been virtually beyond description.

Whereas the throne imagery spoke of static power and authority, the storm imagery transformed it into dynamic movement and freedom.

Christopher Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 2

[Ezekiel's Call to be a Prophet]

He said to me, “Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you.”

As he spoke, **the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet,**
and I heard him speaking to me.

He said: “Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites,
to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me;
they and their ancestors have been in revolt against me
to this very day.

The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn.

Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says.’

And whether they listen or fail to listen—
for they are a rebellious people—
they will know that a prophet has been among them.

Ezekiel 2:1-5

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 1

The phrase son of man is a Hebraism which emphasizes Ezekiel's insignificance or mere humanity. ...

In itself this is not yet a Messianic title, because in Daniel it simply indicates the qualitative distinction between the kingdoms of the world, represented by four great beasts, and the kingdom of the faithful, represented by a human being.

But by the time the Similitudes of Enoch were written (46:1,2) the Son of man had come to mean specifically the Messiah.

Our Lord's use of the title seems to have taken advantage of the ambiguity between the simple and the technical meanings, so that in one sense he could not be accused of making any overt claim to Messiahship, while in the other sense he did not debar those with the requisite spiritual insight from accepting the fuller significance of his person.

John B. Taylor

Dean Inge of Saint Paul's says,

**“God promised
to make you free.**

**He never promised
to make you independent.”**

Madeleine, L'Engle

What prophet quoted proverbs?

Ezekiel

Ezekiel 12:22-23; “Son of man, what is this proverb you have in the land of Israel: ‘The days go by and every vision comes to nothing’? Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am going to put an end to this proverb, and they will no longer quote it in Israel.’ Say to them, ‘The days are near when every vision will be fulfilled.’

Ezekiel 16:44

“Everyone who quotes proverbs will quote this proverb about you: “Like mother, like daughter.”

Ezekiel 18:2-3; “What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel: “The parents eat sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge’? “As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel.

Note from PDE

Jesus as a prophet, multiple times

Matthew 16:2 ... “red sky at night...”

Luke 4:23 ... “Physician, heal yourself!”

From Disappointment to Glory

Since the thirtieth year
was to mark Ezekiel's inauguration into the priesthood,
one can only imagine the disappointment he must have felt.

In the year he was to carry out his priestly functions,
he sat as a captive in Babylon.

Mark Rooker

Ezekiel became one of the greatest prophets of the exile period.

In about Joseph's thirtieth year
he sat as a captive in an Egyptian prison,
filled with disappointment
about the fulfillment of his dreams
(but he had great faith in God's providence).

from PDE

Joseph became the Premier in Egypt, saved the nation, and saved his family.

Consider also that Jesus, in about His 30th year, was rejected and crucified –
then was resurrected in glory.

God has given us the Greatest Story Ever Told!

**Christian worship doesn't just teach us how to think;
it teaches us how to love,
and it does so by inviting us into the biblical story
and implanting that story in our bones.**

James K. A. Smith

**Worship that restores us
is worship that restories us.**

James K. A. Smith

**Desire-shaping worship ...
paints a picture, spins metaphors, tells a story.**

**In this way the gospel isn't just information stored in the intellect;
it is a way of seeing the world that is the very wallpaper of our imagination.**

**Stories that sink into our bones are the stories that reach us
at the level of the imagination. ...**

**We're hooked by stories,
not bullet points.**

James K. A. Smith

Interesting Notes

**Warnings against falling away
from our true identity and responsibility
are just as much relevant to churches now
in the midst of the nations
as to old Jerusalem 'at the centre',
as John perceived
after his own Ezekiel-style theophany
of the glory of the risen Christ.**

Christopher J.H. Wright

PDE: This reflects the timelessness of God's message.

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

When Jesus was arrested

**But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say
it must happen in this way?”**

In that hour Jesus said to the crowd,

**“Am I leading a rebellion,
that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me?**

**Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching,
and you did not arrest me.**

**But this has all taken place
that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.”**

Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Matthew 26:54-56

Pointing to Christ

**... the restoration of the Jews to Jerusalem
must be seen as a type or shadow
of a far more glorious journey home
- the salvation worked among all nations by Christ,
bringing them to the Father (John 14:6).**

**That awesome work of God will be so great
that it will make the redemption of Israel
from slavery in Egypt
shrink in comparison.**

Andrew M. Davis

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 1

[Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision – summary so far]

A windstorm, with an immense cloud with flashing lightning and brilliant light. The center of the fire looked like glowing metal, and in the fire was what looked like four living human-like creatures with four faces and four wings.

Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved.

Each of the four had the face of a human being, a lion, an ox, and an eagle.

The wheels were complicated and sparkled; they moved in any direction.

Wherever the spirit would go, the entity would go!

Above the heads was a crystalline vault, with a throne above.

The sound of the wings was like the roar of rushing waters.

There was a throne above the vault with a fiery being – the glory of the Lord with rainbow-like radiance around Him.

Ezekiel fell down in humility and obeisance.

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 2

[Ezekiel's Call to be a Prophet]

And you, son of man,
do not be afraid of them or their words.

Do not be afraid,
though briers and thorns are all around you
and you live among scorpions.

Do not be afraid of what they say
or be terrified by them,
though they are a rebellious people.

You must speak my words to them,
whether they listen or fail to listen,
for they are rebellious.

Ezekiel 2:6-7

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 2

[Ezekiel's Call to be a Prophet]

But you, son of man,
listen to what I say to you.

Do not rebel like that rebellious people;
open your mouth
and eat what I give you.”

Then I looked,
and I saw a hand stretched out to me.
In it was a scroll,
which he unrolled before me.

On **both sides** of it
were written words
of lament and mourning and woe.

Ezekiel 2:8-10

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

[Ezekiel's Eating the Scroll]

And he said to me,

“Son of man, eat what is before you,
eat this scroll;
then go and speak to the people of Israel.”

So I opened my mouth,
and he gave me the scroll to eat.

Then he said to me,

“Son of man,
eat this scroll I am giving you
and fill your stomach with it.”

So I ate it,

and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth.

Ezekiel 3:1-3

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

The idea of eating the words of God
may have been suggested by the metaphor in Jeremiah 15:16:
‘When your words came, I ate them;
they were my joy and my heart’s delight.’ ...

This word comes directly from God himself.

And secondly, **the scroll has already been fully written upon.**
The word of God is not a blank page
that Ezekiel is invited to fill in for himself
as the mood (or even the spirit) takes him.

Christopher Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

The scroll had writing on the front and on the back,
an unusual feature
because scrolls were normally inscribed only on the inside.

Perhaps it was meant to imply that God had a great deal for Ezekiel to say. [an indication of completeness]

The idea is taken up again in Revelation 5:1,
but no clue is given to the meaning
of this aspect of the scroll's description.

John B. Taylor

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

[Ezekiel Speaking to the People]

He then said to me:

“Son of man,

go now to the people of Israel and speak my words to them.

You are not being sent to a people of obscure speech and strange language,
but to the people of Israel —

not to many peoples of obscure speech and strange language,
whose words you cannot understand.

Surely if I had sent you to them,
they would have listened to you.

But the people of Israel are not willing to listen to you
because they are not willing to listen to me,
for all the Israelites are hardened and obstinate.

Ezekiel 3:4-7

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

**'Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites...
'go now... and speak my words to them' (2:3; 3:4).**

Ezekiel was a man with a mission.

Christopher Wright

**it would have been easier for him,
as God ironically comments,
if he had been sent to a foreign people,
for they would at least have listened to him
even if they did not understand his language,
whereas his own people Israel would understand his language
but would refuse to listen to his message (3:5–7).**

Christopher Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

The phrase son of man is a Hebraism which emphasizes Ezekiel's insignificance or mere humanity. ...

In itself this is not yet a Messianic title, because in Daniel it simply indicates the qualitative distinction between the kingdoms of the world, represented by four great beasts, and the kingdom of the faithful, represented by a human being.

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Our Lord's use of the title seems to have taken advantage of the ambiguity between the simple and the technical meanings, so that in one sense he could not be accused of making any overt claim to Messiahship, while in the other sense he did not debar those with the requisite spiritual insight from accepting the fuller significance of his person.

John B. Taylor

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

[Ezekiel Speaking to the People]

But I will make you as unyielding and **hardened** as they are.

I will make your forehead like the **hardest** stone, **harder** than flint.

Do not be afraid of them or terrified by them,
though they are a rebellious people.”

And he said to me,

“Son of man, listen carefully
and take to heart all the words I speak to you.

Go now to your people in exile and speak to them.

Say to them,

‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says,’
whether they listen or fail to listen.”

Ezekiel 3:8-11

Jesus also spoke truth to power and not all accepted it.

PDE

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

[Ezekiel Being Taken Up by the Spirit]

Then the Spirit lifted me up,
and I heard behind me a loud rumbling sound
as the glory of the Lord rose from the place where it was standing.

It was the sound of the wings of the living creatures
brushing against each other
and the sound of the wheels beside them,
a loud rumbling sound.

The Spirit then lifted me up and took me away,
and I went in bitterness and in the anger of my spirit,
with the strong hand of the Lord on me.

I came to the exiles who lived at Tel Aviv near the Kebar River.

And there, where they were living,
I sat among them for seven days—
deeply distressed.

[perhaps this is the “sour” part...]
Ezekiel 3:12-15

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

**... Ezekiel experiences something
that will happen again several times –
the dynamic transport of God's Spirit.**

Christopher Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

So while we can value all the positive contributions that Ezekiel's education and training as a priest brought to his prophetic ministry, **we must also appreciate the immense personal, professional and theological shock it must have been to him when, in his thirtieth year, the year he ought to have entered on his ordained priestly career, God broke into his life, wrecked all such career prospects, and constrained him into a role he may himself have viewed with considerable suspicion – the lonely, friendless, unpopular role of being a prophet, the mouthpiece of Yahweh.**

No wonder the anger and bitter rage to which he honestly confesses disorientated and overwhelmed him for a full week (3:14–15).

Christopher Wright

Have you ever had a sudden shock and shift in the direction of your life?

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

God would use all that he had built into Ezekiel's life during his years of preparation, but **he would use it in radically different ways from anything Ezekiel had ever imagined.**

Such is sometimes the way of God with those whom he calls to his service.
Christopher Wright

Ezekiel, then, was **called to serve God in the midst of a shattered and shell-shocked people**, a context not far removed from many contexts of mission today.

Christopher Wright

Nothing will ever be more significant for Ezekiel than this encounter with the living God; his whole life and message will be more uncompromisingly God-centred than any other prophet's.

Christopher Wright

Beauty is our sensory access to holiness.

**God reveals himself, that is,
in creation and in Christ,
in ways we can see and hear and touch and taste,
in place and person.**

**Beauty is the term we apply to these hints of transcendence,
these perceptions that there is more going on here
than we can account for.**

Eugene Peterson

Who was transported by the hair of their head?

Ezekiel; Ezekiel 8:3

It must have grown back from him shaving it all off in Ezekiel 5:1

PDE: consider Absalom, for whom transportation stopped when his hair (KJV) was caught in a tree when fleeing Joab's army (also Tom)

**PDE: Who was transported by the lack of hair on their head?
Samson, Judges 16:21 – transported down to Gaza**

Tom: How about John the Baptist? They surely would have lifted his head by his hair to place it on the platter!

Picking the Pearls

Parallel from Ezekiel Chapter 3

The book of Ezekiel uses the title “son of man” more than any other Bible book.

God calls the prophet Ezekiel “son of man” ninety-three times.

And notice the characteristics that the ministries of Ezekiel and Jesus share.

- **Both were called to ministry at age 30.**
- **Both were God’s messenger.**
- **Both found the people unresponsive.**
- **Both came to give a message anyway.**
- **Both brought a message of judgment.**
- **Great personal cost came to both in giving the message.**
- **And both gave what was finally a message of redemption.**

Mark Dever

God has given us the Greatest Story Ever Told!

**“I cannot answer the question,
‘What ought I to do?’
unless I first answer the question,
‘Of which story am I a part?’”**

Alasdair MacIntyre

**Stories hook into our curiosity —
what happens next? —
and into our emotions:
What would I do in that situation?**

**Stories have the unique power to engage
and, if they engage enough, to trigger empathy, enchant.**

David Rose

**... too often we look for the Spirit in the extraordinary
when God has promised to be present in the ordinary.**

**... God shows up at our flooding house
with a canoe, a boat, a helicopter.**

James K. A. Smith

Interesting Notes

...

**it is important to remember Jesus's teaching
that we recognize prophets
not by their gifts
but by their fruits (Matt. 7:16, 20) —
that is,
by whether they obey God (7:17–19).**

Craig S. Keener

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

The Prophet

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites.

You must listen to him.

For this is what you asked of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said,

“Let us not hear the voice of the Lord our God nor **see this great fire anymore**, or we will die.”

The Lord said to me: “What they say is good.

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth.

He will tell them everything I command him.

I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name.

Deuteronomy 18:15-19

See the similarity to the “Great Fire” that Ezekiel witnessed

Picking the Pearls

Pointing to Christ

[John the Baptist Prepares the Way]

The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah,
the Son of God,
as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

“I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way” —

“a voice of one calling in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.’”

And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness,
preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Mark 1:1-4

Note how Mark starts his gospel story with a quote from Isaiah
that points to the coming of Christ.

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

[Ezekiel's Task as Watchman]

At the end of seven days the word of the Lord came to me:

“Son of man,

I have made you a **watchman** for the people of Israel;
so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me.

When I say to a wicked person, ‘You will surely die,’
and you do not warn them or speak out to dissuade them
from their evil ways in order to save their life,
that wicked person will die for their sin,
and I will hold you accountable for their blood.

But if you do warn the wicked person
and they do not turn from their wickedness or from their evil ways,
they will die for their sin; but you will have saved yourself.

Ezekiel 3:16-19

Does this “watchman” theme bother anyone besides me?

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

[Ezekiel's Task as Watchman]

“Again, when a righteous person turns from their righteousness and does evil, and I put a stumbling block before them, they will die.

Since you did not warn them, they will die for their sin.

The righteous things that person did will not be remembered, and I will hold you accountable for their blood.

But if you do warn the righteous person not to sin and they do not sin, they will surely live because they took warning, and you will have saved yourself.”

The hand of the Lord was on me there, and he said to me,

“Get up and go out to the plain, and there I will speak to you.”

So I got up and went out to the plain.

And the glory of the Lord was standing there,

like the glory I had seen by the Kebar River, and I fell facedown.

Ezekiel 3:20-23

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

Why this repeat vision?

**Perhaps to dispel any thought
that the whole birthday experience
had been a terrible nightmare or hallucination.**

Christopher Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

[Ezekiel's Task as Watchman]

Then the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet.

He spoke to me and said: “Go, shut yourself inside your house.

And you, son of man, they will tie with ropes;
you will be bound so that you cannot go out among the people.

**I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth
so that you will be silent and unable to rebuke them,
for they are a rebellious people.**

But when I speak to you,
I will open your mouth and you shall say to them,
‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says.’

Whoever will listen let them listen,
and whoever will refuse let them refuse;
for they are a rebellious people.

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

How could God say to him,
‘I am sending you to the Israelites,’
and then, a week later, tell him,
‘Go, shut yourself inside your house’?

Christopher Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

[Ezekiel's Dumbness]

Later we learn that Ezekiel's dumbness of some kind lasted for the first seven years of his ministry.

When Ezekiel was told that Jerusalem was besieged, he was informed that his dumbness would come to an end when he received the news that the city had finally fallen.

And this indeed is what happened, seven years and six months after his initial vision (24:25–27; 33:21–22).
{Jer. 29:26-28}

Christopher Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

Many of the prophets were gifted actors.

In today's world they would have been exponents of physical theatre, exploiting the potential of gesture and mime, even elements of burlesque and clowning. ...

This is one-man street theatre with a very powerful message ...

Christopher Wright

The action signified the message, while the message would sometimes explain and interpret the sign.

Such sign-acts in the ministries of previous prophets, however, were generally short, vivid actions that only took a few moments to make their point.

(Though some of them were protracted over much longer; e.g. Is. 20; Jer. 13:1–11.)

Christopher Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

[Ezekiel's Dumbness]

... it seems much preferable to accept at face value the explanation that 3:27 offers.

Ezekiel was commanded to be silent except when Yahweh gave him something explicit to say.

Although this was not total dumbness in a physiological sense, it was total dumbness in a social sense.

{Ezekiel's first utterance after his call vision, when God for the first time opened his mouth and loosened his tongue, begins with the direct summons to attention:

'This is what the Sovereign LORD says.'
[parallel to John the Baptist's father]}

Christopher Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

[Ezekiel's Dumbness]

{The description in 3:26 need not describe total or permanent dumbness.

The experience of the tongue sticking to the palate
is used of the temporary silence

that signifies respect for authority (Job 29:10),
or a response to great suffering (Ps. 2:15).

Being 'silent' may also be
a chosen reaction to evil (Ps. 39:1– 2; Is. 53:7).}

Christopher Wright

**Christianity is the only religion on earth
that has a God who pursues people
even while they are running away from him —
even when they are his enemies.**

Mark Rooker

Where was Jesus asked to prophesy?

by those wanting to crucify Him...

**“Prophecy to us, Messiah, who hit you?” Matthew 26:68,
Similarly in Mark 14:65 and Luke 22:64**

Cheating the Cheaters

**Jacob, who fooled his near-blind father, Isaac, in a tent,
was fooled in a tent when he was blind on wine, blinded by night,
blinded by lust, and blindly in love.**

**Jacob, who by the most calculating stealth stole what could not be returned,
was tricked into a marriage that could not be undone. ...**

**Jacob, who begrudged and resisted the tradition of firstborn going first,
fell victim to Laban's explanation that it was wrong
"to give the younger before the firstborn" (Gen. 29:26).**

**Jacob, who complained to Laban,
"Why did you cheat me?" (Gen. 29:25 The Message),
used the same word Esau used:**

**"Jacob has cheated me these two times.
He took away my birthright, and behold,
now he has taken away my blessing" (Gen. 27:36 ESV).**

Max Lucado

Interesting Notes

Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your ancestors who killed them.

So you testify that you approve of what your ancestors did; they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs.

Because of this, God in his wisdom said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute.'

Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary.

Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for it all.

Luke 11:47-51

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

We also have the **prophetic** message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

Above all, you must understand that no **prophecy** of Scripture came about by the **prophet's** own interpretation of things.

For **prophecy** never had its origin in the human will, but **prophets**, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:19-21

Christ is having to piece together the prophecies to form a whole.

Pointing to Christ

Concerning this salvation, **the prophets,**
who **spoke of the grace that was to come to you,**
sought intently and with the greatest care,
trying to find out the time and circumstances
to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing
when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah
and the glories that would follow.

It was revealed to them
that they were not serving themselves but you,
when **they spoke of the things that have now been told you**
by those who have preached the gospel to you
by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.

Even angels
long to look into these things.

1 Peter 1:10-12

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Summary from Chapter 3 on

Ezekiel's Task as Watchman

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

[Ezekiel's Dumbness]

... Jeremiah had to be told to stop praying for his people,
in the face of Israel's incorrigible, irredeemable rebellion;
Ezekiel will not even be allowed to start.

{These occasions indicate that Ezekiel was expected to speak aloud,
even if in limited company.

So his dumbness
was obviously not pathological nor total.}

Christopher Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 3

[Ezekiel's Dumbness]

It is far more satisfying and realistic to understand this as a ritual dumbness, or a divinely commanded refusal to make public utterances except under the direct impulse of God's word.

**From that moment onwards,
Ezekiel was to be known as nothing
but the mouthpiece of Yahweh.**

**When he spoke,
it was because God had something to say;
when he was silent,
it was because God was silent.**

John B. Taylor

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 4

[Siege of Jerusalem Symbolized]

**“Now, son of man,
take a block of clay,
put it in front of you
and draw the city of Jerusalem on it.**

**Then lay siege to it:
Erect siege works against it,
build a ramp up to it,
set up camps against it and put battering rams around it.**

**Then take an iron pan,
place it as an iron wall between you and the city
and turn your face toward it.**

**It will be under siege,
and you shall besiege it.**

This will be a sign to the people of Israel.

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 4

Ezekiel gets up and finds a large Babylonian clay brick or tile lying somewhere nearby,
still soft and waiting to be fired.

This would not be a small brick of the western variety, but a sizeable block or rectangular slab.

Christopher J.H. Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 4

[Siege of Jerusalem Symbolized]

**“Then lie on your left side
and put the sin of the people of Israel upon yourself.**

**You are to bear their sin
for the number of days you lie on your side.**

**I have assigned you the same number of days
as the years of their sin.**

**So for 390 days
you will bear the sin of the people of Israel.**

Ezekiel 4:4-5

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 4

[Siege of Jerusalem Symbolized]

**“After you have finished this,
lie down again,
this time on your right side,
and bear the sin of the people of Judah.**

**I have assigned you 40 days,
a day for each year.**

**Turn your face toward the siege of Jerusalem
and with bared arm prophesy against her.**

**I will tie you up with ropes
so that you cannot turn from one side to the other
until you have finished the days of your siege.**

Ezekiel 4:6-8

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 4

[Siege of Jerusalem Symbolized]

“Take wheat and barley, beans and lentils, millet and spelt;
put them in a storage jar and use them to make bread for yourself.

You are to eat it during the 390 days you lie on your side.

Weigh out twenty shekels of food to eat each day and eat it at set times.

Also measure out a sixth of a hin of water and drink it at set times.

Eat the food as you would a loaf of barley bread;
bake it in the sight of the people,
using human excrement for fuel.”

The Lord said,

“In this way the people of Israel will eat defiled food
among the nations where I will drive them.”

Ezekiel 4:9-13

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 4

[Siege of Jerusalem Symbolized]

Then I said,

“Not so, Sovereign Lord!

I have never defiled myself. ...

No impure meat has ever entered my mouth.” [relate to dung?]

“Very well,” he said,

**“I will let you bake your bread over cow dung
instead of human excrement.”**

He then said to me:

“Son of man, I am about to cut off the food supply in Jerusalem.

**The people will eat rationed food in anxiety
and drink rationed water in despair,
for food and water will be scarce.**

**They will be appalled at the sight of each other
and will waste away because of their sin.**

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 4

They represent total periods:

a total of 390 years for Israel's punishment

and a total of 40 years for Judah's punishment.

John B. Taylor

... the 390 years is a very close approximation to the length of time between the building and dedication of the temple by Solomon in the early tenth century to its final destruction in 587.

Christopher J.H. Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 4

**It would not be possible for Ezekiel
to carry out all the instructions given in 4:9–5:4
if his hands were permanently tied, as is suggested in 4:8.**

**Either this is to be taken metaphorically or, more likely,
he spent a part of every day lying facing the requisite direction
with his face towards the model of the besieged city,
his arm bared,
signifying readiness for drastic action (cf. Isa. 52:10),
and his body trussed with cords.**

**Once he had performed this daily demonstration,
he could release himself
and do some of the other symbolical
acts associated with the siege.**

John B. Taylor

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 4

Perhaps those who watched Ezekiel weighing out his food,
measuring his daily ration of water and doing his cooking
were just as much at variance
in their interpretation of its significance
as commentators are today.

James B. Taylor

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 4

**This is not far short of starvation rations on any reckoning,
and it seems incredible that Ezekiel could have lasted on it for over a year.**

**On the other hand,
it would not be out of harmony with our interpretation of this passage
if we argued that this diet related only to his public demonstrative acts
and if we at least allowed the possibility
that he augmented it with other foods
when nobody was looking!**

John B. Taylor

Imagine the changes in Ezekiel's physical appearance! PDE

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 4

**As a concession to his feelings,
God changed the fuel to cow's dung,
which was a perfectly normal form of firing in the East
and remains so to this day.**

**It was probably not regarded as unclean by the Israelites
and may have been in regular use among them
as well as among their neighbours. ...**

**It seems strange that God should command a thing
and then just as quickly retract it or modify it. ...**

**Perhaps the original command was never intended to do anything more
than illustrate the uncleanness of their diet...**

[related to the uncleanness of the idolatrous people]

**At all events,
it is gratifying to note the concession that God graciously made
to his servant's priestly scrupulousness on this occasion.**

John B. Taylor

**People have a way of becoming
what you encourage them to be,
not what you nag them to be.**

D. L. Moody

Prayers for a Child

Hannah's song of thanksgiving to God
looks forward to the time when,
with David as king,
God would humble the proud and arrogant,
and exalt the lowly and humble.

[Samuel's mother]

Mary praises God for the child in her womb
for exactly the same reasons.

Pairing Hannah and Mary is Luke's way of saying,
"Think David when you think of Jesus."

Jesus is David revisited —
Israel's rightful king.

Peter Enns

Interesting Notes

Ezekiel's own recorded prophecies make it clear that he knew and made good use of the prophetic words of Jeremiah.

Christopher J.H. Wright

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

After he was raised from the dead,
his disciples recalled what he had said.

Then they believed
the **scripture** and
the words
that Jesus had spoken.

John 2:22

**Jesus Himself illustrates the difficulty in understanding prophecy
until it is fulfilled and explained.**

Pointing to Christ

[On the Road to Emmaus]

He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the **Prophets**, he explained to them what was said in all the **Scriptures** concerning himself.

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the **Scriptures** to us?”

Luke 24:24-36

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Summary from Chapter 3 on

Ezekiel's Task as Watchman

Ezekiel struck dumb for a time with regard to speaking only God's Word

Ezekiel preparing a live demonstration of the siege of Jerusalem

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 5

[God's Razor of Judgment]

“Now, son of man, take a sharp sword
and use it as a barber's razor
to shave your head and your beard.

total shaving was prohibited
to priests, Leviticus. 21:5

Then take a set of scales and divide up the hair.

When the days of your siege come to an end,
burn a third of the hair inside the city.

Take a third and strike it with the sword all around the city.

And scatter a third to the wind.

This must have been very
embarrassing to Ezekiel!

For I will pursue them with drawn sword.

But take a few hairs and tuck them away in the folds of your garment.

Again, take a few of these and throw them into the fire and burn them up.

A fire will spread from there to all Israel.

Ezekiel 5:1-4

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 6

[Summary - Doom for the Mountains of Israel]

The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, set your face against the mountains of Israel; prophesy against them and say: ‘You mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Sovereign Lord. This is what the Sovereign Lord says to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys: I am about to bring a sword against you, and I will destroy your high places. Your altars will be demolished and your incense altars will be smashed; and I will slay your people in front of your idols. ... Your people will fall slain among you, and you will know that I am the Lord.

“But I will spare some, for some of you will escape the sword when you are scattered among the lands and nations. Then in the nations where they have been carried captive, those who escape will remember me ... And **they will know that I am the Lord**; I did not threaten in vain to bring this calamity on them.

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 7

[Summary – The End Has Come]

The word of the Lord came to me:

“Son of man, this is what the Sovereign Lord says to the land of Israel:

“The end! The end has come upon the four corners of the land!

The end is now upon you,

and I will unleash my anger against you.

I will judge you according to your conduct

and repay you for all your detestable practices.

I will deal with them according to their conduct,

and by their own standards I will judge them.

“Then **they will know that I am the Lord.**”

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 8

[Vision - Idolatry in the Temple]

In the sixth year, in the sixth month on the fifth day, while I was sitting in my house and the elders of Judah were sitting before me, the hand of the Sovereign Lord came on me there.

I looked, and I saw a figure like that of a man.

From what appeared to be his waist down he was like fire, and from there up his appearance was as bright as glowing metal.

He stretched out what looked like a hand and took me by the hair of my head.

The Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and in visions of God he took me to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the north gate of the inner court, where the idol that provokes to jealousy stood.

And there before me was the glory of the God of Israel,
as in the vision I had seen in the plain.

Ezekiel 8:1-5

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 8

[Vision - Idolatry in the Temple]

Then he said to me, “Son of man, look toward the north.” So I looked, and in the entrance north of the gate of the altar I saw this idol of jealousy.

And he said to me, “Son of man, do you see what they are doing — the utterly detestable things the Israelites are doing here, things that will drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see things that are even more detestable.”

Then he brought me to the entrance to the court. I looked, and I saw a hole in the wall. He said to me, “Son of man, now dig into the wall.” So I dug into the wall and saw a doorway there.

And he said to me, “Go in and see the wicked and detestable things they are doing here.”

Ezekiel 8:6-9

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 8

[Vision - Idolatry in the Temple]

What Ezekiel saw (summary):

- He saw portrayed all over the walls all kinds of crawling things and unclean animals and all the idols of Israel. [the elders and leaders were worshiping idols]
- He saw women sitting there, mourning the god Tammuz.
- He saw about twenty-five men bowing down to the sun in the east.
- He saw them putting the branch to their nose!

Therefore I will deal with them in anger;
I will not look on them with pity or spare them.
Although they shout in my ears,
I will not listen to them.”

Ezekiel 8:10-17

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 8

[Branch to the Nose (8:14-17)]

This is an unclear gesture that may have referred to an idolatrous practice or possibly an idiomatic expression indicating contempt for God.

Mark Rooker

[Branch to the Nose (8:14-17)]

Tammuz was a Sumerian god of vegetation who in popular mythology died and became the god of the underworld. The cult associated with him was partly a mourning ritual, but also incorporated fertility rites.

Early Jewish commentators translated zēmôrâ (branch) as ‘stench’. The result, ‘they put forth a stench before my nose’, is still somewhat obscure, but now it falls more appropriately in the category of obscenity rather than of Tammuz-worship, which is not required at this stage.

John B. Taylor

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 9

[Vision - Judgment on the Idolaters]

Then I heard him call out in a loud voice, “Bring near those who are appointed to execute judgment on the city, each with a weapon in his hand.” And I saw six men coming from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with a deadly weapon in his hand.

With them was a man clothed in linen who had a writing kit at his side.

They came in and stood beside the bronze altar.

Now the glory of the God of Israel went up from above the cherubim, where it had been, and moved to the threshold of the temple.

Then the Lord called to the man clothed in linen who had the writing kit at his side and said to him, “Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it.”

Ezekiel 9:1-4

**Jesus, of course, did not say,
‘You are the honey of the world.’**

**He said,
‘You are the salt of the earth.’**

Helmut Thielicke

Asking to Speak

**When God asked Moses to speak to Pharoah,
Moses claimed to be without ability.**

**Later, the people asked Moses to speak to them
because they were afraid for God to speak to them (Ex 20:19).
(They must have become confident in his ability)**

Notes

Examples of other prophets who used symbolical actions to accompany or illustrate their pronouncements are:

- **Ahijah (1 Kgs 11:30);**
- **Zedekiah (1 Kgs 22:11);**
- **Elisha (2 Kgs 13:17);**
- **Isaiah (Isa. 20:2–4);**
- **Jeremiah (Jer. 13:1–14; 19:1–10);**
- **Agabus (Acts 21:10ff.).**
- **Ezekiel...**

John B. Taylor

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

Matthew uses “**fulfillment**” in ways broader than modern readers might think.

In some cases “**fulfillment**” refers to a prediction that has come true.

Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem, for example,
fulfills what Micah said centuries earlier
about the origin of a ruler and shepherd of Israel
(Mt 2:6, quoting Mic 5:2).

In other cases “fulfillment” appears to be Matthew’s way of demonstrating that Jesus is listening to and directed by Scripture.

David B. Capes, Rodney Reeves, and E. Randolph Richards

Pointing to Christ

[Jesus appears to His disciples]

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet.

And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement...

He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: **Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.**”

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the **Scriptures.**

He told them, “**This is what is written:** The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

You are witnesses of these things.

Luke 24:40-48

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Summary

He was among ten thousand deported to Babylon in 598/597 BC

Though a priest, He was called to be a prophet, at the age of thirty

Ezekiel's amazing initial vision and call

Ezekiel's task as watchman

Ezekiel struck dumb for a time with regard to speaking only God's Word

Ezekiel prepared a live demonstration of the siege of Jerusalem

Ezekiel was ordered to cut off his hair to demonstrate God's judgment

Ezekiel proclaimed upcoming disaster so that people would know God

Ezekiel was shown the idolatry being exercised in the temple of the Lord

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 9

[Vision - Judgment on the Idolaters]

Then I heard him call out in a loud voice, “Bring near those who are appointed to execute judgment on the city, each with a weapon in his hand.” And I saw six men coming from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with a deadly weapon in his hand.

With them was a man clothed in linen who had a writing kit at his side.

They came in and stood beside the bronze altar.

Now the glory of the God of Israel went up from above the cherubim, where it had been, and moved to the threshold of the temple.

Then the Lord called to the **man clothed in linen** who had the **writing kit** at his side and said to him, “Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it.”

Ezekiel 9:1-4

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 9

[Vision - Judgment on the Idolaters]

As I listened, he said to the others, “Follow him through the city and kill, without showing pity or compassion. Slaughter the [people], but do not touch anyone who has the mark. Begin at my sanctuary.”

So they began with the old men who were in front of the temple.

... While they were killing and I was left alone, I fell facedown, crying out, “Alas, Sovereign Lord! Are you going to destroy the entire remnant of Israel in this outpouring of your wrath on Jerusalem?”

He answered me, “The sin of the people of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great; the land is full of bloodshed and the city is full of injustice. They say, ‘The Lord has forsaken the land; the Lord does not see.’ So I will not look on them with pity or spare them ...

Then the **man in linen** with the **writing kit** at his side brought back word, saying, “I have done as you commanded.”

Ezekiel 9:5-17

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 10

[Vision - God's Glory Departs From the Temple]

I looked, and I saw the likeness of a throne of lapis lazuli
above the vault that was over the heads of the cherubim.

The Lord said to the **man clothed in linen**,
“Go in among the wheels beneath the cherubim.

Fill your hands with burning coals from among the cherubim
and scatter them over the city.”

And as I watched,
he went in.

Now the cherubim were standing on the south side of the temple
when the man went in,
and a cloud filled the inner court.

Ezekiel 10:1-3

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 10

[Vision - God's Glory Departs From the Temple]

Then the glory of the Lord rose from above the cherubim
and moved to the threshold of the temple.

The cloud filled the temple,
and the court was full of the radiance of the glory of the Lord.

The sound of the wings of the cherubim could be heard
as far away as the outer court,
like the voice of God Almighty when he speaks.

When the Lord commanded the **man in linen**,
“Take fire from among the wheels, from among the cherubim,”
the man went in and stood beside a wheel.

Then one of the cherubim reached out his hand
to the fire that was among them.

He took up some of it and put it into the hands of the man in linen,
who took it and went out.

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 10

... the man clothed in linen,
who from being the agent of deliverance in the previous scene
becomes now the agent of fiery judgment.

He is a strangely anonymous character, ...

Later writers would certainly have wanted to give him a name
and make him a Gabriel or a Raphael,
but in Ezekiel's day angels had no names!

John B. Taylor

[Priestly Garments]

He is to put on the sacred linen tunic, with linen undergarments next to his
body; he is to tie the linen sash around him and put on the linen turban.

These are sacred garments; so he must bathe himself with water before he
puts them on.

Leviticus 16:4

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 10

[Vision - God's Glory Departs From the Temple]

I looked, and I saw beside the cherubim four wheels,
one beside each of the cherubim; the wheels sparkled like topaz.

As for their appearance, the four of them looked alike;
each was like a wheel intersecting a wheel.

As they moved,
they would go in any one of the four directions the cherubim faced;
the wheels did not turn about as the cherubim went.

The cherubim went in whatever direction the head faced,
without turning as they went.

Their entire bodies, including their backs, their hands and their wings,
were completely full of eyes, as were their four wheels.

I heard the wheels being called "the whirling wheels." [someone speaking?]

Each of the cherubim had four faces:

One face was that of a cherub, the second the face of a human being,
the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.

[Ezekiel interacts with the vision]

Ezekiel 10:9-14

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 10

[Vision - God's Glory Departs From the Temple]

Then the cherubim rose upward.

These were the living creatures I had seen by the Kebar River.

When the cherubim moved,

the wheels beside them moved;

**and when the cherubim spread their wings to rise from the ground,
the wheels did not leave their side.**

When the cherubim stood still,

they also stood still;

**and when the cherubim rose,
they rose with them,**

because the spirit of the living creatures was in them.

Ezekiel 10:15-17

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 10

[Vision - God's Glory Departs From the Temple]

Then the glory of the Lord departed from over the threshold of the temple and stopped above the cherubim.

While I watched, the cherubim spread their wings and rose from the ground, and as they went, the wheels went with them.

They stopped at the entrance of the east gate of the Lord's house, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them.

These were the living creatures I had seen beneath the God of Israel by the Kebar River, and

I realized that they were cherubim.

Each had four faces and four wings,

and under their wings was what looked like human hands.

Their faces had the same appearance

as those I had seen by the Kebar River.

Each one went straight ahead.

Ezekiel emphasizes his personal experience in the vision

**The mystery Paul embraces
is not the mystery of darkness
that must be dispelled
but the mystery of light
that may be entered.**

Eugene Peterson

Beautiful or Ugly? Inside or Outside?

**1) beautiful on the surface,
but rotten inside;**

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean.

Matthew 23:27

**2) actually beautiful,
but believed to be meaningless (or ugly);**

Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice.

Ezekiel 33:32

**Christ was also beautiful in spirit –
but was thought to be a critical problem who did not have the truth.**

Interesting Notes (A Parallel)

The mark was simply the final letter of the Hebrew alphabet, tav, or T, which in Ezekiel's day was written in the archaic Hebrew script as a simple, slightly sloping cross, like a large lower-case letter 't'.

{Early Christian interpretation, not surprisingly, saw this mark of the tav as a sign of the cross.

Apart from the similarity of meaning at the level of protection (the cross of Christ protects us from the wrath of God), such symbolism is of course anachronistic.}

To place a mark on someone or something could indicate ownership – these were the only people who truly belonged to Yahweh; but more likely it was simply meant as a protective mark when the destroying angels went about their task.

It is similar, in that purpose, to the marking of the doorposts of the Hebrew homes with the blood of the Passover lamb in Egypt just prior to the exodus, to protect them from the destroying angel of Yahweh who inflicted the final plague upon their Egyptian oppressors.

Christopher J.H. Wright

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

Much of Matthew's "**fulfillment**" involves typologies.

Typology is a strategy for pointing out the correspondence between two (or more) of God's acts.

The earlier act is described as the type (from the Greek *typos*, meaning "model") of the latter (antitype).

When Matthew uses typology, he points out the ways in which the antitype (the second) is like the type (the first).

When the antitype transcends or escalates the type, we say that the latter "**fulfills**" the other.

David B. Capes, Rodney E. Richards, and E. Randolph

Pointing to Christ

[Paul's presence before Agrippa]

**But God has helped me to this very day;
so I stand here and testify to small and great alike.**

**I am saying nothing beyond
what the prophets and Moses said would happen –
that the Messiah would suffer and,
as the first to rise from the dead,
would bring the message of light
to his own people
and to the Gentiles.”**

Acts 26:22-23

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Summary

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His task as watchman
He was struck dumb for a time with regard to speaking only God's Word
He prepared a live demonstration of the siege of Jerusalem
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He proclaimed upcoming disaster so that people would know God
He was shown the idolatry being exercised in the temple of the Lord

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 10

... the man clothed in linen,
who from being the agent of deliverance in the previous scene
becomes now the agent of fiery judgment.

He is a strangely anonymous character, ...

Later writers would certainly have wanted to give him a name
and make him a Gabriel or a Raphael,
but in Ezekiel's day angels had no names!

John B. Taylor

[Priestly Garments]

He is to put on the sacred linen tunic, with linen undergarments next to his
body; he is to tie the linen sash around him and put on the linen turban.

These are sacred garments; so he must bathe himself with water before he
puts them on.

Leviticus 16:4

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 12

[Vision: God's Sure Judgment on Jerusalem]

Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the gate of the house of the Lord that faces east.

[Summary] There at the entrance of the gate were twenty-five men ... who are plotting evil and giving wicked advice in this city. ...

Then the Spirit of the Lord came on me, and he told me to say: "... I will execute judgment on you at the borders of Israel. And **you will know that I am the Lord**, for you have not followed my decrees or kept my laws but have conformed to the standards of the nations around you."

Now as I was prophesying,

Pelathiah son of Benaiah died. [He was one of the leaders of the idolatry]

Then I fell facedown and cried out in a loud voice,

"Alas, Sovereign Lord! Will you completely destroy the remnant of Israel?"

Ezekiel 12:1-13

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 12

[Pelatiah died - parallel]

The incident so frightened Ezekiel,
as another such occurrence did the early church (Acts 5:5),
that he again pleaded with God for his people (cf. 9:8).

John B. Taylor

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 12

[Vision: The Promise of Israel's Return]

The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, the people of Jerusalem have said of your fellow exiles and all the other Israelites, ‘They are far away from the Lord; this land was given to us as our possession.’

“Therefore say: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Although I sent them far away among the nations and scattered them among the countries, yet for a little while I have been a sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone.’

“Therefore say: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again.’

“They will return to it and remove all its vile images and detestable idols.

Ezekiel 12:14-18

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 12

[Vision: The Promise of Israel's Return – a New Heart]

I will give them **an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them;**
I will remove from them their heart of stone
and give them a heart of flesh.

Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.
They will be my people, and I will be their God.

But as for those whose hearts are devoted
to their vile images and detestable idols,
I will bring down on their own heads what they have done,
declares the Sovereign Lord.”

Ezekiel 12:14-21

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 12

[Vision: The Promise of Israel's Return – a New Heart]

**Then the cherubim, with the wheels beside them, spread their wings,
and the glory of the God of Israel was above them.**

**The glory of the Lord went up from within the city
and stopped above the mountain east of it.**

**The Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the exiles in Babylonia
in the vision given by the Spirit of God.**

**Then the vision I had seen went up from me,
and I told the exiles everything the Lord had shown me.**

Ezekiel 12:22-25

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 12

[A New Heart and a New Spirit]

More than that, in a supreme act of grace,
there would be given to them
a new heart and a new spirit. ...

The classic biblical character who received this gift was Saul (1 Sam. 10:9),
but it is a recurrent feature of both Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's prophecy
(Jer. 32:39, LXX; Ezek. 18:31; 36:26; cf. Ps. 51:10).

John B. Taylor

**As Saul turned to leave Samuel,
God changed Saul's heart,
and all these signs were fulfilled that day.**

1 Samuel 10:9

**... the best thing
is to see problems as windows to the face of God
and to stand at that window
until God shows us the light
that illuminates our hearts.**

Henry Cloud and John Townsend

Afraid of the People

Saul tried to explain his sin:

“And now I have come to say this to my lord the king
because **the people have made me afraid.**

Your servant thought,

‘I will speak to the king;
perhaps he will grant his servant’s request.’”

2 Samuel 14:15

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus:

Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread,
called the Passover, was approaching,
and the chief priests and the teachers of the law
were looking for some way
to get rid of Jesus,
for **they were afraid of the people.**

Luke 22:1-2

**PDE: Pilate’s fear of losing power implied in Matthew 27:24
also the chief priests, fearing a riot in Matthew 26:5**

Interesting Notes

[1 Peter's Re-preaching of Jeremiah's Message to the Exiles]

God has a word for his people in exile.

Jer 29:1-3, 1 Pet 1:1-2

God is using a foreign empire to mold his people.

Jer 29:4, 1 Pet 1:3–2:10

God's people should submit to this empire and live in peace.

Jer 29:5-7, 1 Pet 2:11–4:11

God has a plan for his people.

Jer 29:10-14, 1 Pet 4:12

God tells his people to expect suffering, judgment, restoration.

**Jer 29:15-23, Jer 29:24-32, Jer 30:1–31:20,
1 Pet 4:12-16, 1 Pet 4:17–5:9, 1 Pet 5:10**

God tells his people to live in Babylon as aliens.

Jer 31:21-26 1 Pet 5:12-14

David B. Capes, Rodney Reeves, Randolph E. Rodney

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

[Whose Son Is the Messiah?]

Then Jesus said to them,

“Why is it said that the Messiah is the son of David?

David himself declares in the Book of Psalms:

“The Lord said to my Lord:

“Sit at my right hand

until I make your enemies

a footstool for your feet.””

David calls him ‘Lord.’

How then can he be his son?”

Luke 20:41-44

This is sort of a puzzle, even now.

But it showed that the Jewish leaders didn’t know it all, either!

Pointing to Christ

They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day,
and came in even larger numbers
to the place where he was staying.

He witnessed to them from morning till evening,
explaining about the kingdom of God,
and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets
he tried to persuade them about Jesus.

Acts 28:23

Picking the Pearls

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He spoke of judgment and then the return of a remnant
a new heart and a new spirit for God's people

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 12

[Vision: The Exile Symbolized]

The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, you are living among a rebellious people. They have eyes to see but do not see and ears to hear but do not hear, for they are a rebellious people.

The people are blind and deaf!

“Therefore, son of man, pack your belongings for exile and in the daytime, **as they watch**, set out and go from where you are to another place. Perhaps they will understand, though they are a rebellious people.

During the daytime, **while they watch**, bring out your belongings packed for exile. Then in the evening, **while they are watching**, go out like those who go into exile. **While they watch**, dig through the wall and take your belongings out through it. Put them on your shoulder **as they are watching** and carry them out at dusk. Cover your face so that you cannot see the land, for I have made you a sign to the Israelites.”

Ezekiel 12:1-6

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 12

[Vision: The Exile Symbolized]

So I did as I was commanded.

During the day I brought out my things packed for exile. Then in the evening I dug through the wall with my hands. I took my belongings out at dusk, carrying them on my shoulders **while they watched.**

In the morning the word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, **did not the Israelites, that rebellious people, ask you, ‘What are you doing?’”**

“Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: This prophecy concerns the prince in Jerusalem and all the Israelites who are there.’

Say to them, ‘I am a sign to you.’

“As I have done, so it will be done to them.

They will go into exile as captives.

Ezekiel 12:7-11

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 12

[Vision: The Exile Symbolized]

The prince among them will put his things on his shoulder at dusk and leave, and a hole will be dug in the wall for him to go through. He will cover his face so that he cannot see the land. I will spread my net for him, and he will be caught in my snare; I will bring him to Babylonia, the land of the Chaldeans, but he will not see it, and there he will die. I will scatter to the winds all those around him — his staff and all his troops — and I will pursue them with drawn sword.

“They will know that I am the Lord, when I disperse them among the nations and scatter them through the countries. **But I will spare a few of them** from the sword, famine and plague, so that in the nations where they go they may acknowledge all their detestable practices.

Then they will know that I am the Lord.” [echoed again in vs 20b]

Ezekiel 12:12-15

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 12

Once again he resorts to symbolic action
by acting the part of an exile in flight,
creeping through a hole in the wall under cover of darkness,
shouldering his pack,
and making off,
having taken care that these significant movements
would be noted.

From this the disbelieving were to learn
the imminent fate of their countrymen.

Later reflection has doubtless associated the incident
with the fate of King Zedekiah and his army, who,
as we know from 2 Kings 25:4-7,
suffered precisely what is here described
when the city fell (ch. 12).

William Neil

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 12

[12:1–20]

... No doubt Ezekiel's strange doings
were becoming a common talking-point among the exiles,
and there was never a shortage of spectators
to watch and to gossip about every detail of what he did.

In this way he soon developed
as good a system of communication
as any in Tel Abib.

John B. Taylor

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 12

[Vision: There Will Be No Delay]

The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, what is this **proverb** you have in the land of Israel: ‘**The days go by and every vision comes to nothing**’?”

Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am going to put an end to this **proverb**, and they will no longer quote it in Israel.’ Say to them, ‘The days are near when every vision will be fulfilled. For there will be no more false visions or flattering divinations among the people of Israel. But I the Lord will speak what I will, and it shall be fulfilled without delay. For in your days, you rebellious people, I will fulfill whatever I say, declares the Sovereign Lord.’”

The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, the Israelites are saying, ‘The vision he sees is for many years from now, and he prophesies about the distant future.’

“Therefore say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: **None of my words will be delayed any longer**; whatever I say will be fulfilled, declares the Sovereign Lord.’”

Ezekiel 12:21-28

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 13

[False Prophets Condemned]

The word of the Lord came to me:

“Son of man, prophecy against the prophets of Israel
who are now propheying.

Say to those who prophecy **out of their own imagination**:

‘Hear the word of the Lord!

This is what the Sovereign Lord says:

Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit
and have seen nothing!

Your prophets, Israel, are like jackals among ruins.

You have not gone up to the breaches in the wall
to repair it for the people of Israel

so that it will stand firm in the battle on the day of the Lord.

Their visions are false and their divinations a lie.

[fill in the gaps]

Ezekiel 13:1-6a

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 13

[False Prophets Condemned]

“Because they lead my people astray, saying,
“Peace,” when there is no peace,
and because,
when a flimsy wall is built,
they cover it with **whitewash**,
therefore tell those who cover it with **whitewash**
that it is going to fall.

Rain will come in torrents,
and I will send hailstones hurtling down,
and violent winds will burst forth.

When the wall collapses, will people not ask you,
[consider the house built on sand, Luke 6:49]

“Where is the **whitewash** you covered it with?”

Ezekiel 13:10-12

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 13

Our Lord's words about the Pharisees,
whom he describes as “**whitewashed** tombs” (Matthew 23:27-28),
find a striking verbal parallel
in Ezekiel's condemnation
of the “**whitewashers**” of the truth in his time.

William Neil

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!

You are like **whitewashed** tombs,
which look beautiful on the outside
but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead
and everything unclean.

In the same way,
on the outside you appear to people as righteous
but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.”

Matthew 23:27-28

**If the universe is a miracle written too large
for those who are spiritually nearsighted to recognize it,
God also works in some details
that many people consider too small to recognize.**

Craig S. Keener

A Period of Waiting

**Just as the destruction of the temple
seemed like the darkest moment for God's people,
so did the death of God's Son. ...**

**The darkness of the crucifixion, though,
would soon give way to the light of the resurrection.**

**What seemed like defeat
would ultimately be victory.**

Landon Dowden

Interesting Notes

For everything that was written in the past
was written to teach us,
so that through **the endurance taught in the Scriptures**
and the encouragement they provide
we might have hope.

Romans 15:4

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

[At the end of the Last Supper]

Then Jesus asked them,

“When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals,
did you lack anything?”

“Nothing,” they answered.

He said to them,

“But now if you have a purse,
take it, and also a bag;
and if you don’t have a sword,
sell your cloak and buy one.

It is written:

‘**And he was numbered with the transgressors**’;
and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me.

Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment.”

Luke 22:35-37

Pointing to Christ

So, imagine what we would do
if we didn't have Matthew, Mark, Luke or John.

How would we know Jesus
and make sense of our experience of Christ?

We probably would follow Paul's example,
poring over the Old Testament to see the story of Jesus
and our life together in Christ on every page.

Paul would remind us that
we are part of a bigger story.

David B. Capes, Rodney Reeves, Randolph E. Richards

Picking the Pearls

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a new heart and a new spirit for God's people
He became a living parable of the exile
He condemned false prophets

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 14

[Idolators Condemned]

Some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat down in front of me.

Then the word of the Lord came to me: ... When any of the Israelites set up idols in their hearts and put a wicked stumbling block before their faces and then go to a prophet, I the Lord will answer them myself in keeping with their great idolatry. I will do this to **recapture** the hearts of the people of Israel, who have all deserted me for their idols.'

“Therefore say to the people of Israel, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Repent! Turn from your idols and renounce all your detestable practices! ... When any of the Israelites ... separate themselves from me and set up idols in their hearts ... and then go to a prophet to inquire of me, I the Lord will answer them myself. ... **Then you will know that I am the Lord.**

... the prophet will be as guilty as the one who consults him. Then the people of Israel will no longer stray from me ... **They will be my people, and I will be their God, declares the Sovereign Lord.**”

Ezekiel 14:1-11

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 14

[Not even if ...]

The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, if a country sins against me by being unfaithful and I stretch out my hand against it to cut off its food supply and send famine upon it and kill its people and their animals, even if these three men — **Noah, Daniel and Job** — were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, declares the Sovereign Lord.

“Or if I send wild beasts through that country and they leave it childless and it becomes desolate so that no one can pass through it because of the beasts, as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, even if **these three men** were in it, they could not save their own sons or daughters. They alone would be saved, but the land would be desolate.

“Or if I bring a sword against that country ...

“Or if I send a plague into that land and pour out my wrath on it ...

Ezekiel 14:12-23

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 15

[Jerusalem as a useless vine (for building purposes)]

The word of the Lord came to me:

**“Son of man, how is the wood of a vine different
from that of a branch from any of the trees in the forest?**

**Is wood ever taken from it to make anything useful?
Do they make pegs from it to hang things on?**

**And after it is thrown on the fire as fuel
and the fire burns both ends and chars the middle,
is it then useful for anything?**

**If it was not useful for anything when it was whole,
how much less can it be made into something useful
when the fire has burned it and it is charred?**

Ezekiel 15:1-5

The image of God’s people as a vine was of beautiful fruitfulness...

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 16

[Jerusalem as an adulterous wife that had been saved from abandonment]

Ezekiel reports God's analogy about taking care of a foundling rejected and cast out into a field. He took care of her and when she matured. He entered into a marriage covenant with her. He dressed her in beautiful clothes and jewelry and fed her the finest foods. She became a beautiful queen.

But she trusted in her beauty and acted as a prostitute with Assyria and Babylonia to obtain their interest. She gave them all of God's gifts.

Therefore God pronounced judgment on her, promising that she would be humbled and her power and attraction taken away.

The two kingdoms of God's people were compared to Sodom and Gomorrah.

This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will deal with you as you deserve, because you have despised my oath by breaking the covenant. Yet I will remember the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. ... So I will establish my covenant with you, and you will know that I am the Lord.

Ezekiel 16:59-63

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 16 – a story

... Ezekiel drew on this analogy of the marriage-bond but couched it in terms which might well have been borrowed from a popular oriental tale of a foundling child being rescued by a passing traveller and eventually wedded by him.

The idea of the 'rags-to-riches' plot has endeared itself to every generation and every culture that likes listening to good stories.

As told by Ezekiel, however, the story is no longer endearing.

Compare this story to that of the Good Samaritan

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 17

[A story about Two Eagles and a Vine]

The word of the Lord came to me:

“Son of man, set forth an allegory and tell it to the Israelites as a parable.

Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: A great eagle with powerful wings, long feathers and full plumage of varied colors came to Lebanon.

Taking hold of the top of a cedar, he broke off its topmost shoot and carried it away to a land of merchants, where he planted it in a city of traders.

“He took one of the seedlings of the land and put it in fertile soil. He planted it like a willow by abundant water, and it sprouted and became a low, spreading vine. Its branches turned toward him, but its roots remained under it. So it became a vine and produced branches and put out leafy boughs.

“But there was another great eagle with powerful wings and full plumage. The vine now sent out its roots toward him from the plot where it was planted and stretched out its branches to him for water. It had been planted in good soil by abundant water so that it would produce branches, bear fruit and become a splendid vine.’

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 17

[A story about Two Eagles and a Vine]

Then the word of the Lord came to me:

“Say to this rebellious people, ‘Do you not know what these things mean?’

Say to them: ‘The king of Babylon went to Jerusalem and carried off her king and her nobles, bringing them back with him to Babylon. Then he took a member of the royal family and made a treaty with him...

But the king rebelled against him by sending his envoys to Egypt to get horses and a large army. ...

[God promised judgment on the two eagles (Babylon and Egypt)]

“This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will take a shoot from the very top of a cedar and plant it; I will break off a tender sprig from its topmost shoots and plant it on a high and lofty mountain. ... it will produce branches and bear fruit and become a splendid cedar. Birds of every kind will nest in it; they will find shelter in the shade of its branches. ...

“I the Lord have spoken, and I will do it.”

Ezekiel 17:11-24

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 18

[A story about Two Eagles and a Vine]

The word of the Lord came to me:

“What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel:

“‘The parents eat sour grapes,
and the children’s teeth are set on edge’?”

“As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord,
you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel.

For everyone belongs to me,
the parent as well as the child —
both alike belong to me.

Ezekiel 18:1-4

The entire chapter follows many possibilities through family members.

**God forgives our sins,
which he truly blots out;
and yet sin leaves a negative effect
on the way we think and act.**

**But the mercy of God
is stronger even than this.**

Pope Francis

Jesus and Moses: Return

... part of Matthew's creative telling of Jesus's birth story is to present him as a new Moses.

Both Jesus and Moses escape a mass-murdering monarch — Pharaoh was threatened by the Hebrew reproduction rate, ordered the male infants to be drowned in the Nile, and Moses alone escaped in a basket on the Nile.

Then as an adult,
Moses again escapes Pharaoh's wrath for killing an Egyptian.

Moses only returns, as the book of Exodus tells us,
after God told him that,
“all those who were seeking your life are dead.”

These are the very same words that God tells Joseph in Matthew:
the holy family is to return home [from Egypt]
“for those who were seeking the child's life are dead.”

Peter Enns

Interesting Notes

Now to him who is able to establish you
in accordance with my gospel,
the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ,
in keeping with the **revelation of the mystery**
hidden for long ages past,
but **now revealed** and made known
through the prophetic writings
by the command of the eternal God,
so that all the Gentiles might come
to the obedience that comes from faith —
to the only wise God be glory forever
through Jesus Christ!
Amen.

Romans 16:25-27

(Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

[Peter Speaks to Onlookers in Jerusalem]

“Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But **this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer.**

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah, **who has been appointed for you** — even Jesus.

Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as **he promised long ago through his holy prophets.**

For Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. ...

“Indeed, beginning with Samuel, all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days. And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers...”

Acts 3:17-25

Pointing to Christ

Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it,
as it is written:

“Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion;
see, your king is coming,
seated on a donkey’s colt.”

At first his disciples did not understand all this.

Only after Jesus was glorified
did they [the disciples] realize that
these things had been written about him
and that these things had been done to him.

John 12:14-16

Picking the Pearls

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a new heart and a new spirit for God's people

He became a living parable of the exile

He condemned false prophets

Idolators condemned, even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were involved

Jerusalem as a useless vine (for building purposes)

Jerusalem as an adulterous wife that had been saved from abandonment

An allegory about two eagles (Egypt and Babylonia) and a vine

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 15

[Jerusalem as a useless vine (for building purposes)]

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from that of a branch from any of the trees in the forest?**

**Is wood ever taken from it to make anything useful?
Do they make pegs from it to hang things on?**

**And after it is thrown on the fire as fuel
and the fire burns both ends and chars the middle,
is it then useful for anything?**

**If it was not useful for anything when it was whole,
how much less can it be made into something useful
when the fire has burned it and it is charred?**

Ezekiel 15:1-5

**The image of God’s people as a vine was of beautiful fruitfulness...
Refs: Psalm 80, Isaiah 5, Jeremiah 2:21, Ezekiel 9:10**

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 18

[Denial of an old proverb]

The word of the Lord came to me:

“What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel:

“‘The parents eat sour grapes,
and the children’s teeth are set on edge’?”

“As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord,
you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel.

For everyone belongs to me,
the parent as well as the child —
both alike belong to me.

Ezekiel 18:1-4

The entire chapter follows many possibilities through family members.

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 18

[18:1-4] The opening paragraph of Ezekiel 18 introduces the subject of the entire chapter — individual accountability.

**The subject is summarized in the quotation of a popular proverb:
The fathers eat sour grapes,
and the children's teeth are set on edge.**

The popularity of this quotation indicated that the defeated Jerusalemites had succumbed to a fatalistic view that blamed their ancestors for their present troubles.

A similar sentiment is found in Lamentations 5:7.

Mark Rooker

**In the mind of Ezekiel, as with all the Old Testament writers,
morality was the expression of a man's religion.**

There could be no divorce between the two.

John B. Taylor

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 18

**Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked?
declares the Sovereign Lord.**

**Rather,
am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?**

Ezekiel 18:23

**Jesus' portrayal of the joy in heaven
over one sinner that repents
has its roots
in the message of Ezekiel the evangelist.**

Christopher J. H. Wright

**Ezekiel 18:23 (with 33:11) must rank
among the most wonderful affirmations about God in the Bible ...**

Christopher J. H. Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 18

Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed,
and **get a new heart and a new spirit.**

Why will you die, people of Israel?

Ezekiel 18:31

More on this idea later...

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 20

**I gave them my decrees and made known to them my laws,
by which the person who obeys them will live.**

Ezekiel 20:11

This phrase appears to derive from Leviticus 18:5.

Obedience to laws brought benefits to a person's life.

**Deuteronomy 30:15-19 states forcefully
that to follow the commandments is to
choose life and blessing;
not to follow them is to
choose death and the curse (Greenberg, 366).**

**This truth is not substantially different from Jesus' statement,
“If you love me,
you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15 RSV).**

Mark Rooker

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 20

The word of the LORD came to me:

“Son of man, set your face toward the south;
preach against the south and prophesy against the forest of the southland.
Say to the southern forest:

‘Hear the word of the LORD.

This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

I am about to set fire to you,

and it will consume all your trees, both green and dry.

The blazing flame will not be quenched,
and every face from south to north will be scorched by it.

Everyone will see that I the LORD have kindled it;
it will not be quenched.’”

Then I said, “Sovereign LORD, they are saying of me,
‘Isn’t he just telling **parables?**’”

Ezekiel 20:45-49

Consider the general lack of attention when parables are being told.

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 19 - 23

Ezekiel 19: An allegorical lament about the princes of Israel – lion cub and vine

Ezekiel 20: Rebellious Israel Purged and then Renewed – discussion of laws

Ezekiel 21: Babylon as God's Sword of Judgment – much "flashing" images

Ezekiel 22: Judgment on Jerusalem's Sins

too much blood and violence

the people of Israel have become like dross left in a furnace

a land that has not been cleansed or rained on

God looked for someone who would build a wall around the land

and stand before Him in the gap (one righteous man?)

Ezekiel 23: Two Adulterous Sisters – Oholah and Oholibah

Both of these names contain the Hebrew term 'ohel, "tent."

Oholah, meaning "her tent," represented Samaria.

Oholibah, "my tent is in her," symbolized Jerusalem

Both are condemned

So that they will know that God is the Sovereign Lord

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 24

[Jerusalem as a Cooking Pot]

... the word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, record this date, this very date, because the king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day.

Tell this rebellious people a **parable** and say to them:

[The activity of Israel is likened to a cooking pot with meat and bones]

“So heap on the wood and kindle the fire.

Cook the meat well, mixing in the spices; and let the bones be charred. Then set the empty pot on the coals till it becomes hot and its copper glows, so that its impurities may be melted and its deposit burned away.

It has frustrated all efforts;

its heavy deposit has not been removed, not even by fire.

‘Now your impurity is lewdness. Because I tried to cleanse you but you would not be cleansed from your impurity, you will not be clean again until my wrath against you has subsided.

‘I the LORD have spoken. The time has come for me to act.

Ezekiel 24:1-14

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 24

[Ezekiel's Wife Dies]

The word of the Lord came to me:

“Son of man, with one blow I am about to take away from you
the delight of your eyes.

Yet do not lament or weep or shed any tears.

Groan quietly; do not mourn for the dead.

Keep your turban fastened and your sandals on your feet;
do not cover your mustache and beard
or eat the customary food of mourners.”

So I spoke to the people in the morning, and in the evening my wife died.

The next morning I did as I had been commanded.

Then the people asked me,

“Won't you tell us what these things have to do with us?
Why are you acting like this?”

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 24

[Ezekiel's Wife Dies]

So I said to them, “The word of the Lord came to me:

“I am about to desecrate my sanctuary — the stronghold in which you take pride, the delight of your eyes, the object of your affection.

The sons and daughters you left behind will fall by the sword.

Ezekiel will be a sign to you; you will do just as he has done.

When this happens, **you will know that I am the Sovereign Lord.**’

And you, son of man, on the day I take away their stronghold, their joy and glory, the delight of their eyes, their heart’s desire, and their sons and daughters as well —

on that day a fugitive will come to tell you the news.

At that time your mouth will be opened;

you will speak with him and will no longer be silent.

So you will be a sign to them, and **they will know that I am the Lord.**”

Ezekiel 24:15-27

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 25 - 32

**This disobedience of the Israelites
now will cost Ezekiel his wife
because God wants to use this drastic measure
to get through to them.**

How does Ezekiel not resent them, or, worse, God?

**How does he still deliver messages to them,
knowing that had they and their families repented earlier,
his wife would not have been taken?**

Landon Dowden

**When researchers studied awe and beauty,
they found an interesting connection:
when we experience awe,
we move toward others in beneficial ways.**

**... When we are in awe of something,
we become less self-centered,
more others-centered,
and more connected to others around us.**

**Beauty interrupts us,
it awakens us,
it undoes us,
it cuts us open,
and restarts our hearts.**

**Beauty is God's evidence
of something far more wonderful coming,
a world beyond the one we can imagine,
even in the most spectacular moments here.**

Jennie Allen

John and Paul

John the seer and Paul the apostle have much in common.

Both experienced post-ascension Christophanies [appearances of Christ].

Both wrote letters to churches.

Both ministered to congregations in the same region of Asia Minor, especially Ephesus.

**Both referred to Jesus as a lamb (Rev 5:6; 1 Cor 5:7),
a letter writer (Rev 2:1; 2 Cor 3:3),
and a conquering king (Rev 19:16; 1 Tim 6:15).**

**Both emphasized the imminent second coming of Christ
(Rev 22:20; 1 Thess 4:16),
warned of a satanic messenger of great deception
(Rev 12:18–13:10; 2 Thess 2:3-10),
and expected suffering for the righteous (Rev 7:14; Phil 1:29).**

**Both described the spiritual war in heaven between God and evil powers
(Rev 12:1-12; Col 2:13-15).**

**Both showed little interest in the earthly Jesus. [physical characteristics]
David B. Capes, Rodney Reeves, and Randolph E. Randolph**

Interesting Notes

If there were ever two chapters in the Bible that demonstrate God's grace is multiplied more than sin, it is Ezekiel 16 and 23. '

These chapters contain some of the most graphic language in Scripture.

If they were sold in the music department of a store, they would come with a warning label for explicit content.

... As shocking as the actions of His people are in these chapters, it's His love that steals our breath.

Landon Dowden

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

So it is clear that Matthew intends for his audience to be well versed in all the ways Jesus speaks and acts to fulfill the Scriptures, both prophetically and typologically. ...

Ironically, many of Jesus' opponents claim that he was set on abolishing God's law and raising up disciples to do the same (Mt 5:17-20).

Matthew's Jesus refuses to back down and denies these charges vehemently, giving us the most law-centered Gospel in the New Testament.

David B. Capes, Rodney E. Richards, and E. Randolph

Pointing to Christ

**A counsel often provided in a hermeneutics class
is to be careful in searching for Christ
under every rock and tree in the Old Testament.**

Greidanus contends, however,

**“since the literary context of the Old Testament
in the Christian canon is the New Testament,
this means that the Old Testament must be understood
in the context of the New Testament.”**

**And since the heart of the New Testament is Jesus Christ,
this means that every message from the Old Testament
must be seen in the light of Jesus Christ.**

Landon Dowden

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Summary (1)

He was among ten thousand deported to Babylon in 598/597 BC

Though a priest, He was called to be a prophet, at the age of thirty

His amazing initial vision and call

His task as watchman

He was struck dumb for a time with regard to speaking only God's Word

He prepared a live demonstration of the siege of Jerusalem

He was ordered to cut off his hair to demonstrate God's judgment

He proclaimed upcoming disaster so that people would know God

He was shown the idolatry being exercised in the temple of the Lord

He saw the man clothed in linen marking the faithful

He spoke of judgment and then the return of a remnant

a new heart and a new spirit for God's people

He became a living parable of the exile

He condemned false prophets

Idolators condemned, even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were involved

Jerusalem as a useless vine (for building purposes)

Jerusalem as an adulterous wife that had been saved from abandonment

An allegory about two eagles (Egypt and Babylonia) and a vine

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Summary (2)

Denial of the popular interpretation of an old proverb

God wants to save His people

God promises to give us a new heart and new spirit – if we respond to Him

The people treat the word of God as though Ezekiel is telling fantasy stories

Ezekiel uses the allegory of the cooking pot

Ezekiel is a sign to the people, as he suffers the death of his wife

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 25 - 32

Ezekiel 25-27: Prophecies against kingdoms

Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre – with a Lament over Tyre

Ezekiel 28: A Prophecy against the King of Tyre

“you were the seal of perfection... in Eden, the garden of God” (12-13)

A Prophecy against Sidon

no longer will the people of Israel have malicious neighbors (24)

Ezekiel 29-32: A Prophecy against Egypt

Judgment on Pharaoh

Nebuchadnezzar’s Reward

A Lament over Egypt

Pharaoh’s Arms are Broken

Pharaoh as a Felled Cedar of Lebanon

A Lament over Pharaoh

Egypt’s Descent into the Realm of the Dead

“The long-standing enemies of God will one day be removed so that he can set up his perfect kingdom of righteousness (29:17-21), ruled by his ideal king, the Messiah (Ezek 29:21; Ps. 2:1-12; 8:1-9)”

Cooper

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 33

Renewal of Ezekiel's Call as Watchman - Accountability

“Son of man, I have made you a **watchman** for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. When I say to the wicked, ‘You wicked person, you will surely die,’ and you do not speak out to dissuade them from their ways, that wicked person will die for their sin, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. But if you do warn the wicked person to turn from their ways and they do not do so, they will die for their sin, though you yourself will be saved.

“Son of man, say to the Israelites, ‘This is what you are saying: “Our offenses and sins weigh us down, and we are wasting away because of them. How then can we live?”’

Say to them, ‘As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, people of Israel?’

Ezekiel 33:7-11

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 33

Renewal of Ezekiel's Call as Watchman

“Yet your people say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’

But it is their way that is not just. If a righteous person turns from their righteousness and does evil, they will die for it. And if a wicked person turns away from their wickedness and does what is just and right, they will live by doing so.

Yet you Israelites say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’

But I will judge each of you according to your own ways.”

Ezekiel 33:17-20

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 33

Jerusalem's Fall Reported – Ezekiel is allowed to speak again

In the twelfth year of our exile,
in the tenth month on the fifth day,
a man who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said,

“The city has fallen!”

Now the evening before the man arrived,
the hand of the Lord was on me,
and he opened my mouth
before the man came to me in the morning.

So my mouth was opened
and I was no longer silent.

Ezekiel 33:21-22

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 33

Probably we should not think of a solitary escapee
who came only to Ezekiel's house.

He was doubtless one,
perhaps the first to arrive,
of the great new influx of exiles
who had spent the past five or six months
making the same wretched journey
that Ezekiel and his community
had made ten years earlier;
except that this new batch of exiles
had been forced to do it in an emaciated state
after eighteen months of siege and starvation.

We can only imagine the horror of that trail of refugee-prisoners,
and guess at the number who must have perished en route.

Christopher J. H. Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 33

He was released from his dumbness.

**What a sense of joy and relief must be contained in the words
“and he opened my mouth!” ...**

So my mouth was opened and I was no longer silent. ...

**Secondly, the release of Ezekiel from his dumbness
signaled a fresh start in his prophetic ministry. ...**

**He could finally assume the normal role of a prophet,
interceding on the people’s behalf before Yahweh
and offering messages of hope for the future.**

**So long as the temple and the city had stood,
these basic functions had been denied him.**

Christopher J. H. Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 33

Ezekiel's prophetic words are ignored by the people

“As for you, son of man, your people are talking together about you by the walls and at the doors of the houses, saying to each other, ‘Come and hear the message that has come from the Lord.’

**My people come to you, as they usually do,
and sit before you to hear your words,
but they do not put them into practice.**

**Their mouths speak of love,
but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain.**

**So you must be careful to
do everything they tell you.
But do not do what they do,
for they do not practice
what they preach.**

Matthew 23:3

**Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs
with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well,
for they hear your words but do not put them into practice.**

**“When all this comes true — and it surely will —
then they will know that a **prophet** has been among them.”**

Ezekiel 33:30-33

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 34

The Lord Will Be Israel's **Shepherd**

The word of the Lord came to me:

“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel;
prophesy and say to them:

‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says:

Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves!

Should not shepherds take care of the flock?

You eat the curds,

 clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals,
 but you do not take care of the flock.

You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick
or bound up the injured.

You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost.

You have ruled them harshly and brutally.

Ezekiel 34:1-4

This is a critical chapter that we will read in detail!

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 34

The Lord Will Be Israel's **Shepherd**

So they were scattered because there was no shepherd,
and when they were scattered
they became food for all the wild animals.

My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill.

They were scattered over the whole earth,
and no one searched or looked for them.

Ezekiel 34:1-4

This applies especially to all levels of “leadership” in the church.

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 34

The Lord Will Be Israel's **Shepherd**

“Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord:

As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord,
because my flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered
and has become food for all the wild animals,
and because my shepherds did not search for my flock
but cared for themselves rather than for my flock,
therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord:

This is what the Sovereign Lord says:

I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock.
I will remove them from tending the flock
so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves.
I will rescue my flock from their mouths,
and it will no longer be food for them.

Ezekiel 34:7-10

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 34

The Lord Will Be Israel's **Shepherd**

“For this is what the Sovereign Lord says:

I **myself** will search for my sheep and look after them.

As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them,
so will I look after my sheep.

I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered
on a day of clouds and darkness.

I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries,
and I will bring them into their own land.

I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel,
in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land.

I will tend them in a good pasture,
and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land.

There they will lie down in good grazing land,
and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.

Ezekiel 34:11-14

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 34

The Lord Will Be Israel's **Shepherd**

I myself will tend my sheep
and have them lie down,
declares the Sovereign Lord.

I will search for the lost
and bring back the strays.

I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak,
but the sleek and the strong I will destroy.

I will shepherd the flock with justice.

Ezekiel 34:11-16

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 34

The Lord Will Be Israel's **Shepherd**

“As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign Lord says:

I will judge between one sheep and another,
and between rams and goats.

Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture?

Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet?

Is it not enough for you to drink clear water?

Must you also muddy the rest with your feet?

Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink
what you have muddied with your feet?

Ezekiel 34:17-19

Consider a parallel in James 5:5

You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence.
You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter.

Several years ago I invited a Buddhist monk to speak to my Senior elective class, and quite interestingly, as he entered the room, he didn't say a word (that caught everyone's attention). He just walked to the board and wrote this:

**“Everyone wants to save the world,
but no one wants to help mom do the dishes.” [P.J. O'Rourke]**

We all laughed. But then he went on to say this to my students:

Statistically, it's highly unlikely that any of you will ever have the opportunity to run into a burning orphanage and rescue an infant. But, in the smallest gesture of kindness – a warm smile, holding the door for the person behind you, shoveling the driveway of the elderly person next door – you have committed an act of immeasurable profundity, because to each of us, our life is our universe.

**This is my hope for you for the New Year –
that by your smallest acts of kindness,
you will save another's world.**

John Perricone, Zen and the Art of Public School Teaching

A Period of Waiting

On the period of seven days (Ezekiel 3:15),

- **compare Ezra's experience of sitting in a state of horror until the evening sacrifice (Ezra 9:4).**
- **Job's friends sat with him for seven days and seven nights without speaking a word to him (Job 2:13).**
- **Saul of Tarsus needed three days without food and vision to recover from his Damascus Road experience (Acts 9:9).**
- **Perhaps it is not without significance that seven days was the period for the consecration of a priest (Lev. 8:33)**

... Ezekiel may have regarded this

as the preparation for his ordination to a prophetic priesthood.

Certainly he was not yet ready to open his mouth in prophecy.

John B. Taylor

Interesting Notes

**In chapter 18,
Ezekiel has given us
one of the most profound,
moving and influential reflections
on the relationship
between God's justice and human freedom,
combined with one of the most powerful evangelistic appeals
in the Old Testament.**

Christopher J. H. Wright

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

Above all,
you must understand
that no prophecy of Scripture came about
by the prophet's own interpretation of things.

2 Peter 1:20

Pointing to Christ

**Look to the book of Hebrews
(the entire book)
as its chief purpose
is to point to Christ.**

**It begins with a comparison to Melchizedek,
as the type of the high priest
that Christ now take on
in the most ultimate sense.**

**The author of Hebrews ...
launches his epistle
with a whole salvo of texts
applied to Jesus.**

Christopher J.H. Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Summary (2)

Denial of the popular interpretation of an old proverb

God wants to save His people

God promises to give us a new heart and new spirit – if we respond to Him

The people treat the word of God as though Ezekiel is telling fantasy stories

Ezekiel uses the allegory of the cooking pot

Ezekiel is a sign to the people, as he suffers the death of his wife

Condemnation of various nations

Ezekiel's call as a watchman

The fall of Jerusalem reported – Ezekiel's speech is freed

Ezekiel's prophecies ignored

The Lord will Israel's Shepherd (being continued)

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 34

The Lord Will Be Israel's **Shepherd**

The shepherds only take care of themselves

They have not helped the flock

They were not concerned for the lost, and the flock was scattered

They have ruled harshly and brutally

The Lord has promised to become the Shepherd

He will rescue them, bring them back, and provide for them

He will shepherd with justice for the flock

Note the links between Ezekiel 34:6 and 'and no one looked for them'; 'leaving the 99 to search for 1 (Luke 15:4), and 'I am the Good Shepherd' (John 10:11)

PDE

The Good Shepherd message connects Psalm 23 and John 10

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 34

The Lord Will Be Israel's Shepherd

“As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign Lord says:

I will judge between one sheep and another,
and between rams and goats.

Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture?

Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet?

Is it not enough for you to drink clear water?

Must you also muddy the rest with your feet?

Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink
what you have muddied with your feet?

Ezekiel 34:17-19

Consider a parallel in James 5:5

You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence.

You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter.

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 34

The Lord Will Be Israel's **Shepherd**

“Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says to them:

See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep.

Because you shove with flank and shoulder,
butting all the weak sheep with your horns
until you have driven them away,
I will save my flock,
and they will no longer be plundered.

Ezekiel 34:20-22a

Consider a parallel to our sometimes limited fellowship...

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 34

The Lord Will Be Israel's **Shepherd**

I will judge between one sheep and another.

**I will place over them one shepherd,
my servant David,
and he will tend them;
he will tend them and be their shepherd.**

**I the Lord will be their God,
and my servant David
will be prince among them.**

I the Lord have spoken.

Ezekiel 34:22b-24

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 34

The Lord Will Be Israel's Shepherd

“I will make a **covenant** of peace with them and rid the land of savage beasts so that they may live in the wilderness and sleep in the forests in safety.

I will make them and the places surrounding my hill a blessing.

I will send down showers in season;
there will be showers of blessing.

The trees will yield their fruit and the ground will yield its crops;
the people will be secure in their land.

They will know that I am the Lord,
when I break the bars of their yoke
and rescue them from the hands
of those who enslaved them.

Ezekiel 34:25-29

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 34

The Lord Will Be Israel's **Shepherd**

**They will no longer be plundered by the nations,
nor will wild animals devour them.**

**They will live in safety,
and no one will make them afraid.**

**I will provide for them a land renowned for its crops,
and they will no longer be victims of famine in the land
or bear the scorn of the nations.**

**Then they will know that I, the Lord their God,
am with them and that they, the Israelites,
are my people, declares the Sovereign Lord.**

**You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture,
and I am your God, declares the Sovereign Lord.”**

Ezekiel 34:28-31

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 34

Christ is the one of whom Ezekiel 34 speaks.

**He is the one in whom
all the covenants of the Old Testament
find their fulfillment,
including the covenant of peace.**

**He is the ultimate Shepherd-King
as the crowds recognized,
if only for a moment,
during his triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matt. 21: 9).**

Mark Rooker

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 34 – Reprise of Jeremiah 23:1-6

“Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!” declares the LORD.

Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend my people:

“Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done,” declares the LORD.

“I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number.

I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing,” declares the LORD.

Jeremiah 23:1-4

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 34 – Link to Jeremiah 23:1-6

“The days are coming,” declares the LORD,
“when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch,
a King who will reign wisely
and do what is just and right in the land.

In his days Judah will be saved
and Israel will live in safety.

This is the name by which he will be called:
The LORD Our Righteous Savior.

Jeremiah 23:5-6

Ezekiel 34 is a colourfully expanded meditation on Jer. 23:1–6.

Christopher J. H. Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 34

Sheep are the most frequently mentioned animal in the Bible, and those who take care of them (“the shepherds”), appear in approximately one hundred biblical passages.

Mark Rooker

Many of the most prominent people in the Old Testament were shepherds by vocation.

These include

Abraham (Gen. 12:16),

Isaac (Gen. 26:14),

Moses (Exod. 3:1),

David (2 Sam. 7:8), and

Amos (Amos 1:1).

Mark Rooker

Note that Jacob was a shepherd, as well! (Esau, too)

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 34

[Ezekiel 34:25, 30–31]

**The precise expression ‘a new covenant’
is one that is actually used only by Jeremiah
(in a text quoted twice in Hebrews),
which has unfortunately led many people
to the misunderstanding that Jeremiah alone
prophesied about a new covenant at all.**

**But as can be seen very clearly here,
Ezekiel also envisaged the future of Israel
in terms of a renewal of the covenant, as did Isaiah.**

**The most fundamental formulation of the covenant relationship
is to be found in the reciprocal phrases
‘the LORD [Yahweh] is your God’ and
‘you [Israel] are his people’.**

Christopher J. H. Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 34

Just as the leaders of Israel were denounced for exploiting the sheep in Ezekiel 34:2,8,10, Peter accused elders of leading the church with self-serving motives (1 Pet. 5:2-3).

David (2 Sam. 7:8), and Amos (Amos 1:1).

... [the] shepherd metaphor is used in the New Testament to describe how church pastors and elders should fill their responsibilities (1 Pet. 5:1-5; Acts 20:28-29).

... Jeremiah equated the Messiah with the true Shepherd from the line of David, calling him “a righteous Branch,” “the LORD Our Righteousness,” during whose reign “Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety” (Jer. 23:5-6).

Mark Rooker

Picking the Pearls

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Mark Rooker

Any green pasture in Judea is the work of some shepherd. He has cleared the rough, rocky land. Stumps have been torn out, and brush has been burned. Irrigation. Cultivation. Such are the work of a shepherd. Hence, when David says, “He makes me to lie down in green pastures,” he is saying, “My shepherd makes me lie down in his finished work.” With his own pierced hands, Jesus created a pasture for the soul.

Max Lucado

In common language, to “prepare a table” (Ps. 23:5) means to make a meal and then set the table. Shepherds obviously don’t prepare a physical table for sheep; but shepherds do prepare high, grassy areas — tablelands or mesas (the Spanish word for table) — for their sheep by scouting them out ahead of time, eradicating any poisonous plants, and ensuring the water holes are clear from obstructions. What are some of the ways God prepares a table for us as his sheep in everyday life?

John Ortberg

Psalm 23 Possible Variations

**Couldn't David have thought of a better metaphor?
Surely he could have.**

**After all, he outran Saul and outgunned Goliath.
Why didn't he choose something other than sheep?**

**How about: "The Lord is my commander in chief, and I am his warrior."
There. We like that better.**

A warrior gets a uniform and a weapon, maybe even a medal.

**Or, "The Lord is my inspiration, and I am his singer."
We are in God's choir; what a flattering assignment.**

**Or, "The Lord is my king, and I am his ambassador."
Who wouldn't like to be a spokesperson for God?**

Max Lucado

Interesting Notes

**To change the metaphor yet again,
the great historical account
of God's redemption in the Old Testament
is not like a booster rocket that,
once the space capsule is launched,
drops off and falls away into redundant oblivion.**

**Rather, to adapt Paul's own metaphor,
the biblical narrative is like a tree.**

**We now enjoy the spreading branches and abundant fruit
in its New Testament fulfillment.**

**But the Old Testament is like the inner rings of the trunk —
still there, the evidence of a history long past,
but still the supporting structure
on which the branches and fruit have grown.**

**The relationship is one of organic continuity,
not ruptured discontinuity and abandonment.**

Christopher J. H. Wright

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

We already have described this way of viewing biblical prophecy, calling it with George Ladd the “prophetic perspective.”

Which means that distant events are seen foreshadowed in the near, and near events are seen as previews of the distant.

This perspective runs throughout the prophetic parts of Scripture.

John Piper

John Piper’s view of our temporal interpretation of prophetic events is that of looking at a range of mountains and trying to determine the distance of each – difficult to do from that perspective.

Pointing to Christ

And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me.
You have never heard his voice nor seen his form,
nor does his word dwell in you,
for you do not believe the one he sent.

You study the Scriptures diligently
because you think that in them you have eternal life.

These are the very **Scriptures that testify about me**,
yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

“But do not think I will accuse you before the Father.
Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set.

If you believed Moses, you would believe me,
for **he wrote about me**.

But since you do not believe what he wrote,
how are you going to believe what I say?”

John 5:36-47

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Summary (2)

Denial of the popular interpretation of an old proverb

God wants to save His people

God promises to give us a new heart and new spirit – if we respond to Him

The people treat the word of God as though Ezekiel is telling fantasy stories

Ezekiel uses the allegory of the cooking pot

Ezekiel is a sign to the people, as he suffers the death of his wife

Condemnation of various nations

Ezekiel's call as a watchman

The fall of Jerusalem reported – Ezekiel's speech is freed

Ezekiel's prophecies ignored

The Lord will be Israel's Shepherd

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 34

The shepherds of the past and the Shepherd of the future (34:1–31)

It is not unusual, either in the Old Testament or in other writings from the Ancient Near East, to find **rulers designated as shepherds** (cf. Isa. 44:28; Jer. 2:8; 10:21; 23:1–6; 25:34–38; Mic. 5:4,5; Zech. 11:4–17).

Moses and David are given this description (Isa. 63:11; Ps. 78:70f.) and it is not without significance that both these men received their call to leadership while they were actually serving as shepherds of a flock.

The word 'shepherd' suggests leadership and caring, ... It is also worth noting that the close connection between the king and the shepherd motif justifies us in seeing a certain kingly quality in such well-known passages as Psalm 23 (where the rod in verse 4 is the same word as a royal sceptre) and John 10.1.

John B. Taylor

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 34

[Ezekiel 34:11–16]. The good Shepherd.

A flock of sheep must be looked after by someone, and here God represents himself as taking on the role of Shepherd to his people.

His job will be to find the straying, to rescue the lost, and to feed and tend the whole flock, giving particular attention to the weak and ailing members.

The picture of the shepherd searching out the wanderer, in verse 12, is a remarkable foreshadowing of the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15: 4ff.), which our Lord doubtless based on this passage in Ezekiel.

It illustrates as clearly as anything can do the tender, loving qualities of the God of the Old Testament, and strikes a death-blow at those who try to drive a wedge between Yahweh, God of Israel, and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Nor is it the only passage that speaks of the tender shepherd (cf. Pss 78:52f.; 79:13; 80:1; Isa. 40:11; 49:9f.; Jer. 31:10).

John Taylor

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 34-35

Ezekiel 34: The Lord will be Israel's Shepherd

The existing shepherds are not caring for the sheep

The Lord, via a descendant of David, will take over and take care of them

Ezekiel 35: A Prophecy against Edom

Because they hated Israel and delivered them to the sword (vs 5)

Ezekiel 36:

Continued condemnation of Edom for their glee in Israel's demise

Hope for the Mountains of Israel – they will again become fruitful

Restoration

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 36

For I will take you out of the nations;
I will gather you from all the countries
and bring you back into your own land.

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean;
I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.

**I will give you a new heart
and put a new spirit in you;**

I will remove from you your heart of stone [heart transplant]
and give you a heart of flesh.

And I will put my Spirit in you and move you ["move us"]
to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors;
you will be my people,
and I will be your God.

Two “core” ideas (in red) ...

Ezekiel 36:24-28

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 36

[36:24–30]

**At last the words of pure gospel come pouring forth
in one of the most beautiful passages in the whole Bible.**

The repeated ‘I will’ is emphatic.

**All that will happen
will be the work of God himself.**

Christopher J. H. Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 36

This is what the Sovereign Lord says:

On the day I cleanse you from all your sins,
I will resettle your towns,
and the ruins will be rebuilt.

Restoration!
In this world's future, or
in the new universe?

The desolate land will be cultivated
instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass through it.

They will say, "This land that was laid waste has become like the garden of Eden; the cities that were lying in ruins ... are now fortified and inhabited."

Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the Lord have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I the Lord have spoken, and I will do it.'

Once again I will yield to Israel's plea and do this for them: I will make their people as numerous as sheep, as numerous as the flocks ... So will the ruined cities be filled with flocks of people.

Then they will know that I am the Lord."

Another "core" idea (in red) ...

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 36

[36:24–30]

**Once the Israelites have arrived in the land,
God will sprinkle them with clean water so they will be clean.**

**This figurative language is based on water purification practices
when the priest threw water on persons or objects
to cleanse them of impurity (Num. 19:13,20).**

**Sprinkling with water or blood symbolized
the cleansing that occurs through forgiveness (Exod. 12:22; 1 Cor. 6:11).**

Mark Rooker

And that is what some of you were.

**But you were washed,
you were sanctified,
you were justified
in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ
and by the Spirit of our God.**

1 Corinthians 6:11

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 36

Internally, he holds out the offer of a **new heart** and a **new spirit** for the individual Israelite, so that he may be made clean from the defilement of his sins and the uncleanness of the exile and may be motivated from within to live after God's commandments (36:24–28).

In these words Ezekiel gives added definition to Jeremiah's prophecy of the **new covenant** (Jer. 31:31–34), which he appears to have known about in some detail, and in particular he explains how this hope can be effected through a spiritual transplant, by God's gift of a heart of flesh in exchange for man's heart of stone.

The message is clear: man's greatest stumbling-block is in himself and nothing can resolve this problem except the gracious action of God in renewal and spiritual regeneration.

John B. Taylor

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 36

This work of God to transform individual lives through the implementation of **a new heart and a new spirit is referred to in the New Testament as the “new birth” or being “born again.”**

Ezekiel 36:26-27 makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the doctrine of regeneration.

No prophet before Ezekiel assigns the ministry of the Holy Spirit in regeneration to such a prominent place (Feinberg, 205).

Mark Rooker

**It is one thing to say you are sorry
you stepped on your dancing partner's feet;
it is another to take some lessons
so you don't keep doing it!**

Henry Cloud and John Townsend

Contrast: The Case of Two Sauls

Consider a change of heart and infusion of spirit ...

Saul Made King (OT)

As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day. When he and his servant arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came powerfully upon him, and he joined in their prophesying. 1 Samuel 10:9-10

Later...

Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him. 1 Samuel 16:14

Saul, the zealous Jew, persecuting the church

Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison. Acts 8:3

Saul (Paul), with a re-directed heart after meeting Christ on the road ...

Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit Acts 13:9

Interesting Notes

**I'm not sure that any preacher has been asked
to proclaim God's Word
in more peculiar ways
than Ezekiel.**

Landon Dowden

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

For everything that was written in the past
was written to teach us,
so that through the endurance
taught in the Scriptures
and the encouragement
they provide we might have hope.

Romans 15:4

Pointing to Christ

[Hebrews]

... we'd be listening for Jesus himself to speak to us through the Scriptures.

Although Isaiah is the one prophesying in Isaiah 8:17-18, the Preacher assumes that he is listening to Jesus talking (Heb 2:13).

Similarly, Psalm 40 may be a Davidic psalm, but the Preacher hears the voice of the priestly Jesus coming through loud and clear (Heb 10:5-6).

David B. Capes, Rodney Reeves, Randolph E. Richards

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Summary (2)

Denial of the popular interpretation of an old proverb

God wants to save His people

God promises to give us a new heart and new spirit – if we respond to Him

The people treat the word of God as though Ezekiel is telling fantasy stories

Ezekiel uses the allegory of the cooking pot

Ezekiel is a sign to the people, as he suffers the death of his wife

Condemnation of various nations

Ezekiel's call as a watchman

The fall of Jerusalem reported – Ezekiel's speech is freed

Ezekiel's prophecies ignored

The Lord will be Israel's Shepherd

The Lord condemns present behavior, but promises restoration

The Lord also promises a new heart, a new spirit, and a new covenant

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 37

The Valley of Dry Bones

The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out
by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley;
it was full of bones. [from an unknown battle]

He led me back and forth among them,
and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley,
bones that were very dry. [very old, possibly broken pieces]

He asked me,
“Son of man, can these bones live?”

I said,
“Sovereign Lord, you alone know.” [Ezekiel is careful!]
Ezekiel 37:1-3

Mosaic law required all human beings to be given a proper burial,
it was imperative for all dead bodies to be appropriately buried (Deut. 21:22-23).
Mark Rookerç

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 37

The Valley of Dry Bones

Then he said to me,

“Prophecy to these bones and say to them, [preaching to the dead!]

‘Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!

This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones:

I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life.

I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you

and cover you with skin; [all of the non-bone items were supplied by God]

I will put breath in you, and you will come to life.

Then you will know that I am the Lord.”

So I prophesied as I was commanded.

[God works through Ezekiel...]

And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound,

[imagine!]

and the bones came together, bone to bone.

I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them,

but there was no breath in them.

Ezekiel 37:4-8

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 37

The Valley of Dry Bones

Then he said to me,

“Prophecy to the breath;

prophecy, son of man, and say to it,

‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says:

Come, breath, from the four winds

and breathe into these slain,

that they may live.’”

So I prophesied as he commanded me,

and breath entered them;

they came to life

and stood up on their feet

— a vast army.

Ezekiel 37:9-10

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 37

The Valley of Dry Bones

Then he said to me:

“Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel.

They say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.’

Therefore prophesy and say to them:

‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says:

My people, I am going to open your graves
and bring you up from them;

I will bring you back to the land of Israel.

Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord,
when I open your graves and bring you up from them.

I will put my Spirit in you and you will live,
and I will settle you in your own land.

Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken,
and I have done it, declares the Lord.”

God can
restore us
when we
seems to be in
a hopeless
situation!

God is with us
always (i.e.,
Immanuel)

Ezekiel 37:11-14

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 37

As well as these liturgical declarations,
Ezekiel would have known the stories of those rare occasions
in the Old Testament of the resuscitation of the dead
through the powerful prayer of Elijah and Elisha,
and of the startling revival of a corpse upon contact
with the bones of Elisha. [2 Kings 13:21]

So, yes, Ezekiel would have willingly agreed
that it was well within the power of Yahweh to revive the dead.

However, those stories in the traditions of his people
were cases of the resuscitation of recently dead people,
people whose bodies were fully intact and scarcely cold.

But bones?
Dry bones of the long dead?
Fragmentary remains of people
no longer personally identifiable?

Christopher J. H. Wright

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 37

... Israel would live again!

The dead bones would stand up
as a mighty army.

And then they would know that it was only
by the Spirit of Yahweh
that such a national resurrection had taken place. ...

... there is no doubt that Ezekiel's vision of dry bones
and their revival functions
as a very important link in a theological chain
**to which the full biblical hope
of resurrection is anchored.**

Christopher J. H. Wright

Would these soldiers have active minds and personalities?

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 37

[Two Sticks of Wood]

The word of the Lord came to me:

“Son of man, take a stick of wood and write on it,
‘Belonging to Judah and the Israelites associated with him.’
Then take another stick of wood, and write on it,
‘Belonging to Joseph (that is, to Ephraim)
and all the Israelites associated with him.’

Join them together into one stick so that they will become one in your hand.

“When your people ask you, ‘Won’t you tell us what you mean by this?’
say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says:
I am going to take the stick of Joseph —
which is in Ephraim’s hand —
and of the Israelite tribes associated with him,
and join it to Judah’s stick.

I will make them into a single stick of wood,
and they will become one in my hand.’

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 37

[Two Sticks of Wood]

Hold before their eyes the sticks you have written on and say to them,

‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says:

I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone.

I will gather them from all around

and bring them back into their own land.

I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel.

There will be one king over all of them

and they will never again be two nations [relate to denominations?]

or be divided into two kingdoms.

They will no longer defile themselves

with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses,

for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding,

and I will cleanse them.

**They will be my people,
and I will be their God.**

Main theme!

[Especially for David...]

A quip often attributed to Mark Twain ...:

**“He who carries a cat by the tail
learns something
he can learn
in no other way.”**

James K. A. Smith

Ezekiel and Christ

Counted among thousands of Jews exiled to Babylon,
Ezekiel becomes a political and religious prisoner
whom God selects as his mouthpiece.

One of the most startling scenes the prophet encounters
is a valley full of skeletal remains.

The wonder of restoration is exemplified
through the visions of an exiled Old Testament prophet,
and realized throughout the life of Christ.

In Jesus' journeys, he routinely looked on piles of dead bones,
people the religious leaders dismissed,
and spoke life,
leaving those who watched awestruck
by the wonder of restoration.

The Son of God spends his days reaching the marginalized,
healing the smashed-hearted,
setting people free from torment,
and raising corpses back to life.

Interesting Notes

For Ezekiel the worst moment in his life, perhaps other than the death of his wife, was his vision of the **glory** of God **departing** from the temple (Ezek 8 — 10).

“The glory,” is Ezekiel’s favorite term for that tangible presence of YHWH that so filled the temple.

Christopher J. H. Wright

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation,
just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you
with the wisdom that God gave him.

He writes the same way in all his letters,
speaking in them of these matters.

His letters contain some things that are hard to understand,
which ignorant and unstable people distort,
as they do the other Scriptures,
to their own destruction.

2 Peter 3:15-16

Note how Peter "interprets" the words of Paul,
giving them validation and authority.

Peter also warns against the distortion of such interpretation
of Paul's letters and other Scriptura as well.

Pointing to Christ

“Let’s not tear it,”

they said to one another.

“Let’s decide by lot who will get it.”

This happened **that the scripture might be fulfilled** that said,

“They divided my clothes among them
and cast lots for my garment.”

So this is what the soldiers did.

John 19:24

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Summary (2)

Denial of the popular interpretation of an old proverb

God wants to save His people

God promises to give us a new heart and new spirit – if we respond to Him

The people treat the word of God as though Ezekiel is telling fantasy stories

Ezekiel uses the allegory of the cooking pot

Ezekiel is a sign to the people, as he suffers the death of his wife

Condemnation of various nations

Ezekiel's call as a watchman

The fall of Jerusalem reported – Ezekiel's speech is freed

Ezekiel's prophecies ignored

The Lord will be Israel's Shepherd

The Lord condemns present behavior, but promises restoration

The Lord also promises a new heart, a new spirit, and a new covenant

The Lord raises a vast army of bones to life

Ezekiel demonstrates the restoration of union to the nation

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 37

[The Valley of Dry Bones – Summarized]

**The Lord brought Ezekiel by the Spirit of the Lord to the middle of a valley;
it was full of very dry bones from some unknown battle.**

The Lord told Ezekiel to prophesy to the bones that they would come to life.

The Lord caused tendons and skin to cover the bones,

**Then the Lord caused breath to enter and the bones came to life
and a vast army stood up.**

Then the Lord gave meaning to the incident:

The bones are the disobedient people of Israel which are without hope.

The people will be brought out of their graves and raised from the dead.

Then my people, will know that I am the Lord,

I will put my Spirit in them and they will live,

and they will settle in their own land.

The full meaning relates to the Kingdom of God – His Church!

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 37

[Two Sticks of Wood – Summarized so far]

The Lord had Ezekiel demonstrate the ultimate union of Judah and Israel. He had Ezekiel join two sticks in his hand so that they became one. Ezekiel demonstrated this to the people of Israel and told them that God promised to make them one again. There would be one king over all, and God would cleanse them of their sins.

The Lord declared:

**They will be my people,
and I will be their God.**

a main theme!

Consider the desire of the people of Israel to be united after so many years! Remember that the unified nation only lasted from Saul to Solomon. There was a similar feeling in the United States during the Civil War (President Abraham Lincoln's mission was to restore unity)

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 37

[Two Sticks of Wood]

“My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd.

They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees.

They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob,
the land where your ancestors lived.

Image: worldly kingdom

They and their children and their children’s children will live there forever,
and David my servant will be their prince forever.

I will make a **covenant of peace** with them;
it will be an **everlasting covenant**.

I will establish them and increase their numbers,
and I will put my sanctuary among them forever.

There will be a
higher level of unity
in the ultimate
Kingdom of God!

My dwelling place will be with them;

a main theme!

I will be their God, and they will be my people.

Then the nations will know that I the Lord make Israel holy,
when my sanctuary is among them forever.”

Ezekiel 37:24-28

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapters 38-39

Ezekiel 37:15–28. The oracle of the two sticks.

**... He is to take one of them in his right hand,
concealing one end of it in his clenched fist.**

**Then he is to take the other stick and join it to the first one,
end to end.**

**His clenched fist will thus grasp the place where the two sticks meet,
and it will appear as if he is holding one long stick in the middle.**

**Understood in this way,
it is not necessary to postulate any kind of miracle in the symbolic act.**

John B. Taylor

The over-arching theme is that of reconciliation! [PDE]

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapters 38-39

[Ezekiel 37:24ff]

David is described as God's servant, a clear Messianic title, as well as king and prince forever (25).

We have already noted that Ezekiel avoided describing any of his Hebrew contemporaries as king (melek), but reserved this title for the Davidic leader of the future (cf. on 7:27;12:10).

The quality of permanence attaching to this future reign and expressed in the repeated phrase for ever, for evermore (25, 26, 28), is a strong indication that Ezekiel is here thinking not so much of a line of Davidic kings, as he had known them in the past, but of a supernatural kingly being in whom would be concentrated all the qualities of wisdom, enduement with the Spirit, righteousness and peace that were expected of God's anointed ruler.

John B. Taylor

A "supernatural" king – Immanuel (God with us)

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapters 38-39

Ezekiel 38-39 contains seven oracles, each introduced by the phrase, “This is what the Sovereign LORD says” (38:3,10,14,17; 39:1,17,25).

Chapters 38 and 39 overlap a great deal in their content as together they depict the onslaught of evil against God's people and God's intervention to deliver them.

Mark Rooker

Consider how working to become one with the Spirit helps us to learn to think and speak in His language naturally and intrinsically.

After about a half-hour ... something changed in the conversation between us. When my [new friend] Claire spoke in French, for the first time ever, **I actually thought in French**. Because I heard and thought in her language, I didn't have to laboriously translate back and forth between the two languages in my mind. Instead, the words started to roll off my tongue. ... If you've ever learned to speak a foreign language, you can relate to the way this shift occurs.

Craig Groeschel

Abraham Lincoln [once] said, "I want to know all God's thoughts." ... If we want to win the physical battle, we have to control the spiritual battlefield. And Scripture makes it clear how we can control the battlefield: "Carefully guard your thoughts because they are the source of true life" (Prov. 4:23 CEV).

Craig Groeschel

I can't handle all of God's thoughts. But if I can become one with God's process of thought, that would satisfy me (and God).

Personal Suffering of the Prophets

**As other prophets would testify,
personal suffering as part of the delivery of God's word
was not unusual.**

**Isaiah endured the shame of wandering around Jerusalem virtually naked
to illustrate a point;**

Jeremiah suffered exclusion from all social intercourse;

Hosea went through agonies of marital betrayal.

Christopher J.H. Wright

Consider also Ezekiel, who lost his wife...

Interesting Notes

For Ezekiel the worst moment in his life, perhaps other than the death of his wife, was his vision of the **glory** of God **departing** from the temple (Ezek 8 — 10).

“The glory,” is Ezekiel’s favorite term for that tangible presence of YHWH that so filled the temple.

Christopher J. H. Wright

Interesting Notes

SYMBOLIC ACTIONS OF EZEKIEL

Scripture Ref	Action
3:22-27	Dumbness (i.e., inability to speak)
4:1-3	Sketches city on brick
4:4-8	Lies on left side 390 days, on right side 40 days
4:9-17	Eats rations over dung
5:1-12	Shaves head and divides hair
12:1-12	Digs through a wall
21:18- 23	Creates routes with crossroads for Babylonian king [choices between who He will attack]
24:15-24	Wife dies
33:21-22	Dumbness removed
37:15-28	Joins two sticks

Mark Rooker

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him.

He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters.

His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

2 Peter 3:15-16

Note how Peter "interprets" the words of Paul, giving them validation and authority.

Peter also warns against the distortion of such interpretation of Paul's letters and other Scriptures as well.

(Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

[When the Magi came to ask King Herod about the Birth of Christ]

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed,
and all Jerusalem with him.

When he had called together
all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law,
he asked them where the Messiah was to be born.

“In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied,
“for this is what the prophet has written:

“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.”

Matthew 2:3-6

Note that this is not early Christians interpreting this passage:
King Herod's advisors made the interpretation.

Pointing to Christ

“Let’s not tear it,”

they said to one another.

“Let’s decide by lot who will get it.”

This happened **that the scripture might be fulfilled** that said,

“They divided my clothes among them
and cast lots for my garment.”

So this is what the soldiers did.

John 19:24

Pointing to Christ

These things happened

so that the **scripture would be fulfilled:**

“Not one of his bones will be broken, and,
as another scripture says,

“They will look on the one they have pierced.”

John 19:36-37

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Summary (2)

Denial of the popular interpretation of an old proverb

God wants to save His people

God promises to give us a new heart and new spirit – if we respond to Him

The people treat the word of God as though Ezekiel is telling fantasy stories

Ezekiel uses the allegory of the cooking pot

Ezekiel is a sign to the people, as he suffers the death of his wife

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The fall of Jerusalem reported – Ezekiel's speech is freed

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The Lord condemns present behavior, but promises restoration

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Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapters 38-39

Ezekiel 38-39 contains seven oracles, each introduced by the phrase, “This is what the Sovereign LORD says” (38:3,10,14,17; 39:1,17,25).

Chapters 38 and 39 overlap a great deal in their content as together they depict the onslaught of evil against God's people and God's intervention to deliver them.

Mark Rooker

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapters 38-39

Ezekiel 38:23 summarizes Ezekiel 38,

And so I will show my greatness and my holiness, and I will make myself known in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord.'

while Ezekiel 39:20-29 summarizes Ezekiel 39.

... “Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will now restore the fortunes of Jacob and will have compassion on all the people of Israel, and I will be zealous for my holy name. ... When I have ... gathered them from the countries of their enemies, I will be proved holy through them in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that **I am the Lord their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind. I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the people of Israel, declares the Sovereign Lord.”**

While chapter 39 begins by addressing the end times of the distant future, it closes (39:21-29) by addressing the return of the Israelites from Babylon in the more immediate future.

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 39

In promising to pour out His Spirit (Ezekiel 39:29),
God committed to dwell not just with His people
but also in them. ...

When we think of our bodies as the temple of God,
it puts sinning in a different perspective.

Landon Dowden

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapters 40-48

‘Few chapters of the Bible separate interpreters into such strongly diverse camps of interpretation as the last nine chapters of Ezekiel – probably more than at any other place in the Scriptures.’

Kaiser, quoted by Landon Dowden

‘A confession of ignorance about the precise meaning of these passages is nothing to be ashamed of. Just because commentators are dogmatic about a certain interpretation is no guarantee that they are right. We need the illumination of the Holy Spirit to help us come to understand every word of Scripture. In passages like these, meekness is the best approach.’

Derek Thomas, quoted by Landon Dowden

We must have consistency with the first and the second commandments!

PDE

**Where there is no “moral gravity” –
that is, no force that draws us to the center –
there is spiritual weightlessness.**

Dallas Willard

Interesting Notes

[The Wickedness of Joash]

After the death of Jehoiada,
the officials of Judah came
and paid homage to the king,
and he listened to them.

They abandoned the temple of the LORD,
the God of their ancestors,
and worshiped Asherah poles and idols.

Because of their guilt,
God's anger came on Judah and Jerusalem.

Although **the LORD sent prophets to the people**
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... Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Amos, and Zechariah all recorded their visions as part of the books that bear their names.

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who does these things' [Amos 9:11,12]**

- things known from long ago.

"It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God."

Acts 15:12-19

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Acts 24:14-15

Pointing to Christ

**Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus,
called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God –
the gospel he promised beforehand
through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures
regarding his Son,
who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David,
and who through the Spirit of holiness
was appointed the Son of God in power
by his resurrection from the dead:
Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Romans 1:1-4

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Jesus's explanation that he is the goal and focus of the entire Old Testament is in Luke 24:36–49.

Peter Enns

... Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost.

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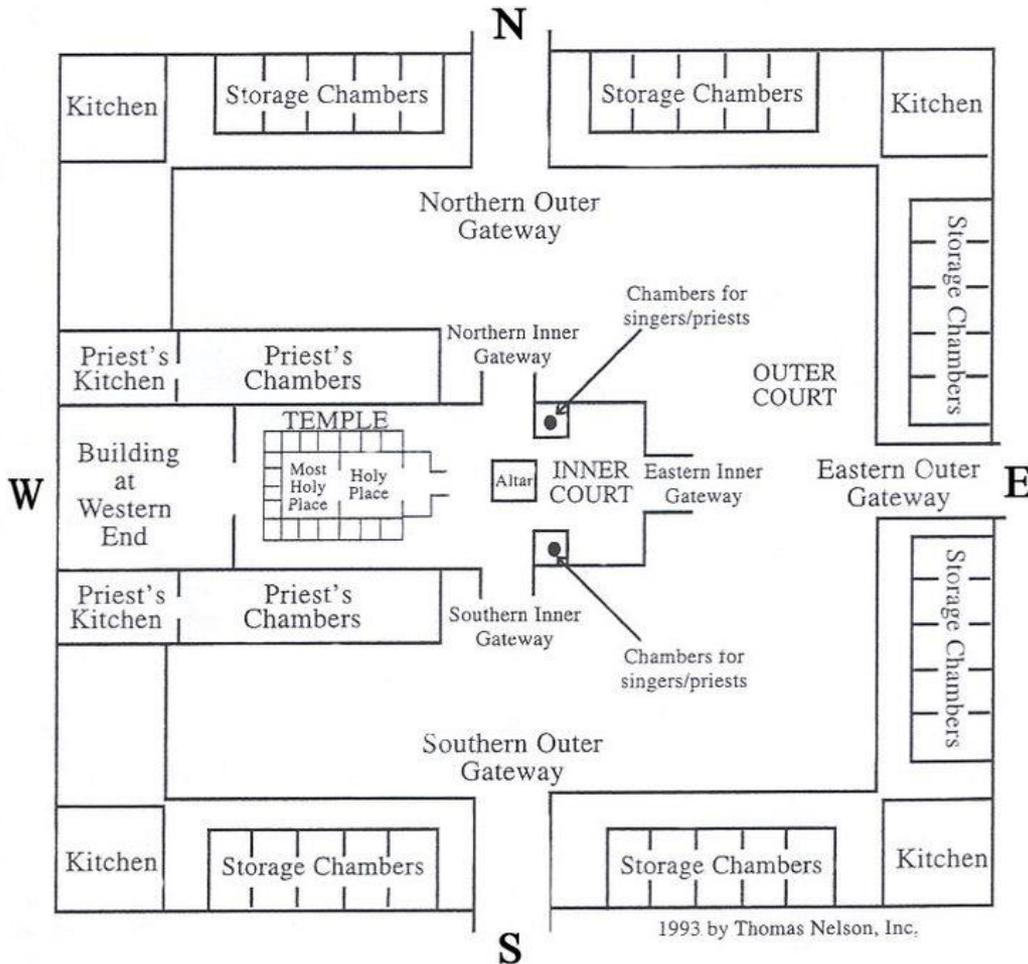
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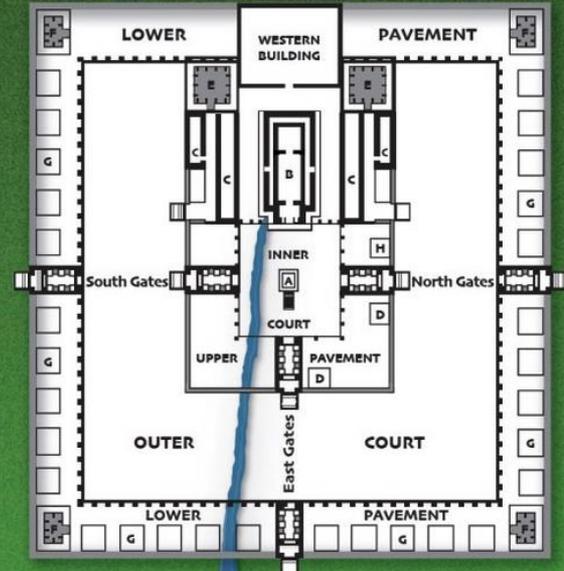
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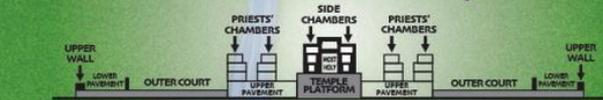
Ezekiel's Temple



Ezekiel's Vision of a New Temple



The Sanctuary



- A — Brazen Altar
- B — Temple Building
- C — Priests' Chambers
- D — Singers' Chambers
- E — Priests' Boiling and Baking Places
- F — Levites' Boiling Places
- G — Thirty Chambers
- H — Place for Washing the Sacrifices

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Consider some of the places where God met with people:

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PDE

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arrogant
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Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus,
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[Ezekiel 43:1–12] The glory of the Lord returns.

**It was nineteen years since Ezekiel had seen the vision
of the glory of the Lord
leaving his temple (10:18–22; 11:22–24).**

**Now he sees his return,
to occupy and to consecrate this new building to be his holy sanctuary.**

**His appearance was the same as it had been before by the river Chebar
(yet another link which this closing vision has with Ezekiel's earlier work)
and it prompted the same response of awe and adoration.**

[Ezekiel 43:1–5] The glory of the God of Israel.

**Having entered, the glory filled the temple,
as it had done at the consecration of Solomon's temple
(1 Kgs 8:10f.; 2 Chr. 5:14; cf. Isa. 6:1–3).**

John Taylor

**The Bible never makes the analogy
that people are stupid like sheep.**

**It does demonstrate awareness
that both tend to wander.**

Timothy S. Laniak

Burning without Consuming

Moses and the Burning Bush

Exodus 3:1-4 - Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. **Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up.** So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.”

When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!”

And Moses said, “Here I am.”

Moses and the Burning Mountain

Exodus 24:17 – “To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain.” (but with no “consumption”)

Interesting Notes

[Ezekiel 32-37]

Three dimensions of the message of these chapters seem to stand out – especially when they are set alongside the challenge of similar material in other prophetic books.

First, they unquestionably affirm the sovereignty of Yahweh as God in the midst of the ebb and flow of international affairs.

Secondly, they equally clearly portray the transience of all human power and glory, whether political, military or economic.

And thirdly, they repeatedly affirm that the goal of all God's action is that the nations will know him, Yahweh, to be God.

Christopher J. H. Wright

Interesting Notes

In Elisha's and Elijah's time,
there were three towns that had companies of prophets...

- 1) Gilgal (2 Kings 2:1)
- 2) Bethel (2 Kings 2:3)
- 3) Jericho (2 Kings 2:5)

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

[Paul Preaching in Pisidian Antioch (A)]

We tell you the good news:

What God promised our ancestors he has fulfilled for us,
their children, by raising up Jesus.

As it is written in the second Psalm:

**‘You are my son;
today I have become your father.’** [Psalm 2:7]

God raised him from the dead
so that he will never be subject to decay.

As God has said,

**‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings
promised to David.’** [Isaiah 55:3]

So it is also stated elsewhere:

‘You will not let your holy one see decay.’
[Psalm 16:10 Septuagint]

Acts 13:32-35

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

[Paul Preaching in Pisidian Antioch (B)]

When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy.

They began to contradict what Paul was saying
and heaped abuse on him.

Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly:

“We had to speak the word of God to you first.

Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves
worthy of eternal life,
we now turn to the Gentiles.

Think of the irony:
the Gentiles “got it”
when the Jews did not

For this is what the Lord has commanded us:

**‘I have made you a light for the Gentiles,
that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’”**

[Isaiah 49:6]

When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of
the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

Acts 13:45-48

Picking the Pearls

Pointing to Christ

[The analogy of the branch (1)]

The prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah all make use of the branch motif to describe Israel's future leader.

Isaiah introduces the concept in 4:2: “In that day the Branch of the LORD will be glorious.” ...

Isaiah 11:1 describes the branch as coming “from the stump of Jesse,” a clear reference to David's line (1 Sm 16:1, 11–13). ...

Jeremiah 23:5–6 and 33:15–16 are quite similar in proclaiming a righteous Branch of David whom God will raise up as king and name “the LORD Our Righteousness.” ...

Jeremiah 33:17–18 adds the detail that kingship and priesthood will both feature strong leadership in that day.

Bryan Beyer

Picking the Pearls

Pointing to Christ

[The analogy of the branch (2)]

Zechariah 3: 8 describes the “servant branch” God will raise up in the coming days as he performs a great work among his people.

Zechariah 6:12–15 climaxes the branch motif by describing the Branch as the one who will build God’s temple, rule as a priest, and bring harmony between **kingship and priesthood. ...**

The New Testament proclaims this prophetic theme’s fulfillment in Christ, hailing from the line of David (Matthew 1:1), serving as our great high priest (Hebrews 9:11–12), and ruling as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16).

Bryan Beyer

Picking the Pearls

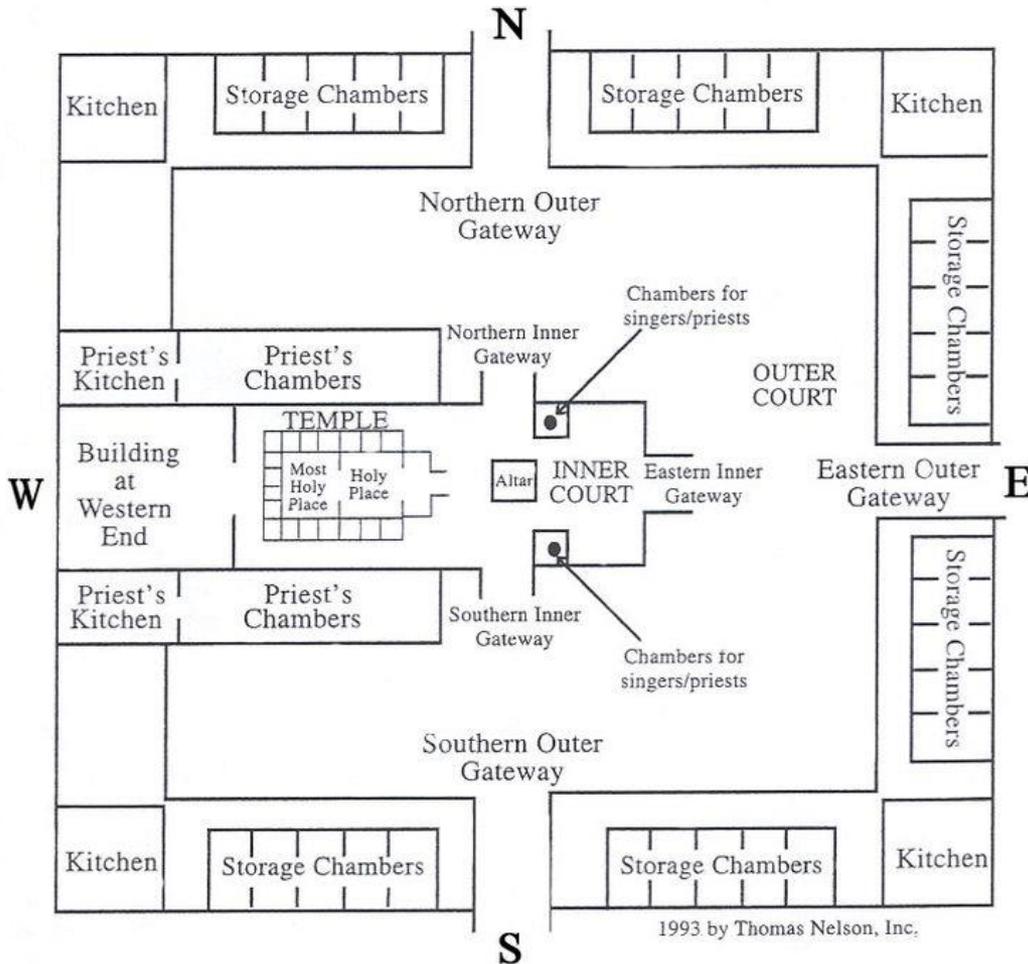
Pearls from Ezekiel Summary (3)

Ezekiel given the vision of a new temple - in great detail
The Glory of the Lord returns

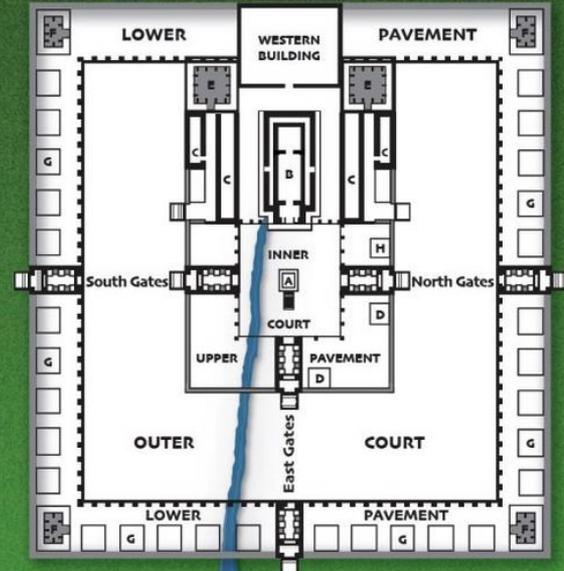
Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapters 40-42

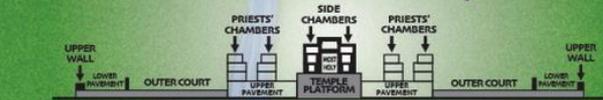
Ezekiel's Temple



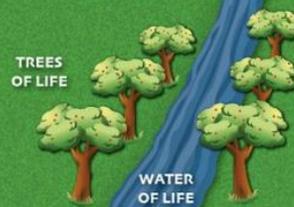
Ezekiel's Vision of a New Temple



The Sanctuary



- A — Brazen Altar
- B — Temple Building
- C — Priests' Chambers
- D — Singers' Chambers
- E — Priests' Boiling and Baking Places
- F — Levites' Boiling Places
- G — Thirty Chambers
- H — Place for Washing the Sacrifices



Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapters 40-48 (The New Temple)

**Consider the impact to the people of Israel,
of losing to temple,
the intended place for the presence of God.**

**They believed in it as a political
as well as a religious symbol.**

**Their hope of the future
was irrevocably linked to the issue
of a temple for their God.**

**God, through Ezekiel,
provides a hope by presenting the plans for a new temple.**

**This temple plan we know now to be representative,
not of a physical temple built by man,
but of what God will ultimately provide.**

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 44

[The Priesthood Restored]

Then the man brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary,
the one facing east, and it was shut.

The Lord said to me,

“This gate is to remain shut.

It must not be opened; no one may enter through it.

It is to remain shut because the Lord, the God of Israel,
has entered through it.

The prince himself is the only one who may sit inside the gateway
to eat in the presence of the Lord.

He is to enter by way of the portico of the gateway
and go out the same way.”

Then the man brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the temple.

I looked and saw **the glory of the Lord** filling the temple of the Lord,
and I fell facedown.

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 44

[The Priesthood Restored]

The Lord said to me, “Son of man, look carefully, listen closely and give attention to everything I tell you concerning all the regulations and instructions regarding the temple of the Lord. Give attention to the entrance to the temple and all the exits of the sanctuary.

These crimes were listed:

detestable practices,
uncircumcised foreigners (heart and flesh) brought into the sanctuary,
breaking God’s covenant.

the wrong people were put in charge of God’s sanctuary.

Levites went far from God (Zadok’s descendants were then put in charge)

Ezekiel 44:5-16

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 44

[The Priesthood Restored]

New or additional rules given:

- priests must wear linen clothes when they enter the ... the inner court,
- they must not wear any woolen garment while ministering
- they must not wear anything that makes them perspire.
- they must change clothes when they leave (to not consecrate others)
- they must not shave their heads or let their hair grow long,
- they are not to drink wine in the inner court.
- they must not marry widows or divorced women
- they are to teach the people about what is holy and clean
- they are to serve as judges according to God's ordinances
- they are to keep festival laws and to keep the Sabbath holy
- they must not defile himself by going near a dead person (with exceptions)

Benefits:

- the Lord is to be the only inheritance the priests have
- they will eat the grain offerings, the sin offerings and the guilt offerings

Ezekiel 44:5-31

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 45

[Israel Fully Restored]

Land allotment:

present to the Lord a portion of the land as a sacred district, 25,000 cubits (~ 8 mi) long and 20,000 cubits (~ 7.1 mi) wide; the entire area will be holy.

a section 500 cubits (~ 875 ft) square is to be for the sanctuary, with 50 cubits (~ 87.5 ft) around it for open land.

in the sacred district, measure off a section 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 cubits (~3.4 mi) wide. In it will be the sanctuary, the Most Holy Place. 4

an area 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 cubits wide will belong to the Levites, who serve in the temple, for towns to live in.

the city will have an 5,000 cubits (~1.7 mi) wide and 25,000 cubits long, adjoining the sacred portion; it will belong to all Israel.

the prince will have the land bordering each side of the area this land will be his possession in Israel.

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 45-46

[Israel Fully Restored]

Commands for the prince:

do what is just and right

use accurate scales

stop dispossessing God's people

offer special gifts as designated

provide the burnt offerings, grain and drink offerings at the festivals

Instructions for the sacrifices

make atonement for the temple

observe the Passover,

a festival lasting seven days,

during which bread must be made without yeast.

Ezekiel 45:9-31, Ezekiel 46

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 46

Ezekiel 46:19–24.

... So the temple was a place for sacrificing, cooking and eating, as well as for prayer and so-called 'spiritual' activities.

The Christian church has been the poorer when it has drawn a firm dividing line between spiritual life and social activities.

In Ezekiel's temple, at any rate, there was envisaged a healthy fusion of the two elements, and this was typical of much in Old Testament worship.

John Taylor

**When God tells the people what to do,
this is not a job description,
but a doctor's prescription.**

John Piper

Interesting Notes

“But they were disobedient and rebelled against you;
they turned their backs on your law.

They killed your **prophets**,
who had warned them
in order to turn them back to you;
they committed awful blasphemies.

Nehemiah 9:26

The ultimate killing to control the “problem” of hearing God’s word
is the crucifixion of Christ!

Interesting Notes

[Moab and Ammon march on Judah to attack, and God promises help]

Early in the morning they left for the Desert of Tekoa.

As they set out,

Jehoshaphat stood and said,

“Listen to me, Judah and people of Jerusalem!

Have faith in the LORD your God

and you will be upheld;

have faith in his prophets

and you will be successful.”

2 Chronicles 20:20

Interesting Notes

Perhaps musicians were considered prophets:

David ... set apart some of the sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun for the ministry of prophesying, accompanied by harps, lyres and cymbals.

... The sons of Asaph were under the supervision of Asaph, who **prophesied** under the king's supervision.

As for Jeduthun, ... his sons..., six in all, under the supervision of their father Jeduthun, who **prophesied**, using the harp in thanking and praising the Lord.

As for Heman [the kings **seer**], from his sons ... All ... were under the supervision of their father for the music of the temple of the Lord, with cymbals, lyres and harps, for the ministry at the house of God.

... all of them trained and skilled in music for the Lord ...

Young and old alike,
teacher as well as student,
cast lots for their duties.

Interesting Notes

**In 2 Kings 19:20-28,
there is a prophecy from Isaiah (son of Amoz)
given to Hezekiah
in response to his prayer for deliverance
from Sennacherib of Assyria.**

**This prophecy is not included
in the Book of Isaiah.**

**Not all of God's (or Jesus's) activities are recorded for us
as we might expect them.**

Pointing to Christ

[Salvation for the Gentiles (2)]

And again, Isaiah says, [Isaiah 11:10 (Septuagint)]

**“The Root of Jesse will spring up,
one who will arise to rule over the nations;
in him the Gentiles will hope.”**

**May the God of hope fill you
with all joy and peace as you trust in him,
so that you may overflow with hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit.**

Romans 15:12-13

Pointing to Christ

[Salvation for the Gentiles (3)]

Now to him who is able to establish
you in accordance with my gospel,
the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ,
in keeping with the revelation of the mystery
hidden for long ages past,
but now revealed and made known
through the **prophetic writings**
by the command of the eternal God,
so that all the Gentiles
might come to the obedience
that comes from faith –
to the only wise God
be glory forever through Jesus Christ!

Amen.

Romans 16:25-27

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Summary (3)

Ezekiel given the vision of a new temple - in great detail
The Glory of the Lord returns
The Priesthood is restored

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 47

[The River From the Temple]

The man brought me back to the entrance to the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was trickling from the south side.

Measurements:

after a thousand cubits (~ 1/3 mi), the water was ankle-deep
after another thousand cubits (~ 2/3 mi), the water was knee-deep
after another thousand cubits (total ~ 1 mi), the water was waist-deep
after another thousand cubits (total ~ 1 1/3 mi) the water was over head
it was also evidently too wide to cross.

Ezekiel 47:1-6

Consider the growth of the river to the growth of the Kingdom of God, as expressed by Jesus in the parable of the mustard seed, etc.

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 47

[The River From the Temple – and its benefits]

**Ezekiel asked if he was seeing all of this,
and then was led back to the bank of the river.**

There were a great number of trees on each side of the river.

**He was told that the fresh water emptied into the Dead Sea,
where the salty water became fresh.**

Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows.

**The swamps and marshes will not become fresh;
they will be left for salt.**

Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river.

Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail.

Every month they will bear fruit,

because the water from the sanctuary flows to them.

Their fruit will serve for food and their **leaves for healing.**

Ezekiel 47:7-12

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapters 40-48 (The New Temple)

**Note that the fact that the new temple
has a river running from it
means that it cannot be put
at the same location as the old temple.**

**There are trees of healing
along the banks of the river, too!**

**This further indicates the use of this image
as something symbolic.**

**Remember that Jesus told the woman at the well
that location (building as well)
was not the important thing!**

Worship in spirit and truth is!

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapters 40-48 (The New Temple)

[Eden Restored]

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life,
as clear as crystal,
flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb
down the middle of the great street of the city.

On each side of the river stood the tree of life,
bearing twelve crops of fruit,
yielding its fruit every month.

And the leaves of the tree
are for the healing of the nations.

No longer will there be any curse.

Revelation 22:1-3a

**The strongest, most mature Christians I have ever met
are the hungriest for God.**

**It might seem that those who eat most
would be least hungry.**

**But that's not the way it works with an inexhaustible fountain,
and an infinite feast,
and a glorious Lord.**

John Piper

Interesting Notes

**Jeremiah composed laments for Josiah,
and to this day all the male and female singers
commemorate Josiah in the laments.**

**These became a tradition in Israel
and are written in the Laments.**

2 Chronicles 35:25

Interesting Notes

[Priest and Prophets]

As Israel's religious life developed,
the two offices took on separate and unique functions:

Priests spoke to God **[think of Moses on the flaming mountain]**
for the people,
and prophets spoke to the people
for God.

Fred M. Wood and Ross McLaren

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

[Apollos in Achaia]

**For he vigorously refuted his Jewish opponents in public debate,
proving from the Scriptures
that Jesus was the Messiah.**

Acts 18:28

Interpretation (Prophecy, Scripture, etc.)

“I have **testimony** weightier than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to finish - the **very works that I am doing** - testify that the Father has sent me.

And the **Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me**. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. **[Baptism and Transfiguration]**

You study the **Scriptures** diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very **Scriptures** that **testify** about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

“But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not **believe what he wrote**, how are you going to believe what I say?”
[story of the rich man and Lazarus]

John 5:36-47

Picking the Pearls

Pointing to Christ

[Isaiah 44:3b]

**I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring,
and my blessing on your descendants.**

See Isaiah 32:15, Ezekiel 39:29, Joel 2:28f, and Zechariah 12:10.

**The image of ‘pouring’ links all these passage with
the fulfilment which comes on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16–17).**

**While He may be likened metaphorically
to water, wind, breath, and so on,
the Spirit himself is just as fully personal
in the Old Testament
as he is in the New.**

See especially 63:10, and Ephesians 4:30.

Barry G. Webb

Pointing to Christ

Every writer in the New Testament
used the Old [Testament]
to preach the gospel we claim to preach.

Jesus Himself said He didn't come to abolish the Old,
He came to fulfill it.

To make it **perfectly perfect**
and **completely complete**.

Charles Martin

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Summary (3)

Ezekiel given the vision of a new temple - in great detail

The Glory of the Lord returns

The Priesthood is restored

The river flowing from the temple, with trees of life and healing

Pearls from the Prophets

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapters 40-48

... chapter 47 introduces a new subject,
namely the flow of water from the sanctuary
which pours down in the direction of the Arabah,
bringing life and fertility **[resurrection of the desert]**
to the barren areas of the Dead Sea valley (47:1–12).

John Taylor

Further comparison may be made with Zechariah 14:8,
where the waters flow from Jerusalem
in both westerly and easterly directions;
with Joel 3:18,

**In that day the mountains will drip new wine,
and the hills will flow with milk;
all the ravines of Judah will run with water.**

**A fountain will flow out of the Lord's house
and will water the valley of acacias.**

and with Rev. 22:1–3, which draws heavily on Ezek. 47. ...

John Taylor

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapters 40-48

Nick offered this comparison about the river flowing from the temple in terms of the subject of blessings:

Remember that two and one-half tribes settled on the eastern side of the Jordan River, while the main group settled on the western side (God through Moses gave them permission if they promised to support the elimination of the resident nations). Thus, the nation of Israel – God’s people - flanked the Jordan on both sides. This nation was to bless all nations.

There is a sort of parallel between this and the tree of life that would exist on both sides of the river of life. The healing represented could be a metaphor for the blessings which give healing in Ezekiel’s vision (from God) about the new temple.

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 47-48

[The Boundaries of the Land]

Ezekiel 47:13-23

[The Division of the Land]

the land was divided into portions for each of the 12 tribes

Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben, Judah, Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad [Note the use of the secondary list with the sons of Joseph]; Levi is covered in a special inheritance

there is also information about how the city is run

[The Gates of the New City]

the gates of the city will be named after the tribes of Israel

Reuben, Judah, Levi, Joseph, Benjamin, Dan, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad, Asher, Naphtali [Note the use of the primary list: the sons of Jacob]

And the name of the city from that time on will be:

THE LORD IS THERE.

Ezekiel 48:1-35

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapter 48

[Ezekiel 48]

The whole passage leads us to compare Revelation 21, with its description of a new heaven and a new earth and the vision of the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.

It too had twelve gates, named after the twelve tribes of Israel, but it also had twelve foundations inscribed with the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (Rev. 21:12–14). [which set of twelve names?]

The writer of Revelation owed much to Ezekiel's vivid imagery and was not afraid to Christianize it, because he saw that the symbolism still possessed meaning for the Christian church of his day as well as for the Jews of the exile.

John Taylor

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapters 40-48

Ezekiel's closing words
gave to the city its new name:
Yahweh Shammah,
The Lord is there.

“And the name of the city from that time on will be:
the Lord is there.”

This was a grand finale
to his book
and to his ministry.

John Taylor

What God really wants:
“I will be their (our) God,
and they (we) will be His people.

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel Chapters 40-48

It is particularly appropriate that the book should end,
as it began,
with a vision.

Chapters 1–3 introduced to Ezekiel
the vision of God visiting his people in exile;
chapters 40–48 present Ezekiel
with the vision of God returning to dwell
in the midst of his people,
now restored and re-established
in their own land.

John Taylor

Do not trust in deceptive words and say,
“This is the temple of the LORD,
the temple of the LORD,
the temple of the LORD!”

Jeremiah 7:4

Interesting Notes

**For the wellbeing and future health of the people of God
it was essential that the fixed belief
in the almost magical power
of an inviolable city and a sacrosanct Temple
should be removed.**

**Only in exile through reflection and repentance
could the nation's soul be saved.**

William Neil

Picking the Pearls

Pearls from Ezekiel

**This is the end of our study of Ezekiel,
and the prophets in general.**

**In the next couple of classes,
we will review the “Greatest” of the Pearls.**

What should we remember the most?

What helps us understand God the most?

What helps us understand how God pointed to Christ?

What helps us understand most what God wants from us?

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The Best Pearls from all the Prophets

What should we remember the most?

What helps us understand God the most?

What helps us understand how God pointed to Christ?

What helps us understand most what God wants from us?