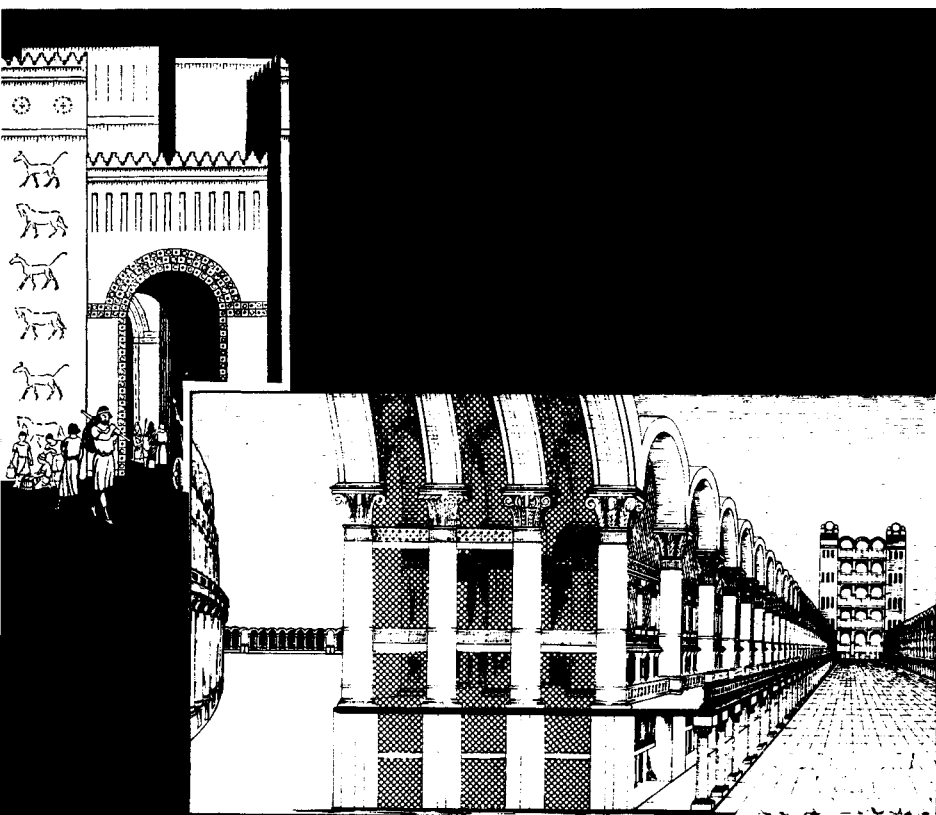


Ezekiel & His Message



**EZEKIEL
& HIS
MESSAGE**

*From The Library Of
George Booker
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Foreword

If it could be said in the time of Solomon that "of the making of books there is no end" (Ecclesiastes 12:12), what could one say of the age in which we live? In Christadelphian circles the production of books over the last hundred and forty years (and especially over the last forty years) has been such that one's own home library now comprises so many books that it is quite impossible to read them all, let alone study.

So it is with some degree of hesitation that this present volume is sent forth. Yet the need does seem to be there — it is surprising that so little of a reasonably analytical and comprehensive nature has appeared amongst us concerning this most wonderful and vitally important book — "The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel" as the A.V. describes it.

Almost 50 years ago, Bro. W. H. Boulton's book was issued under that title. It was reprinted in 1970, and again recently has appeared in our Ecclesial libraries. It is recommended, especially as it takes a rather different method of study from that adopted herein. Hence that book and this one will be found to be complementary; not in any way contradictory.

Some years ago, Bro. H. P. Mansfield's book "Ezekiel's Prophecies of the Restoration", treating with Chapters 33 to 39 on a verse-by-verse basis appeared — this, unfortunately, has long been out of print. (At one time we considered the possibility of incorporating it in this present book, but found this to be impracticable).

Then, of course, we still have in print, Bro. H. Sulley's invaluable, but admittedly difficult treatise on "The Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy" dealing with Chapters 40 to 48.

So this volume has been prepared — somewhat different in its approach from that of Bro. Boulton; not so detailed as that of Bro. Mansfield; not so comprehensive or (hopefully), as difficult to follow as that of Bro. Sulley. But, one hopes, of such a nature and content as to be helpful to those who have need of assistance in comprehending the messages given to Yahweh's servant for transmission down the ages to His servants who have followed.

May He bless this work to that end.

It is appropriate to acknowledge and to thank those who have assisted. The charts and maps are mostly based upon those produced years ago by Bro. J. Berry to assist me in work undertaken at the Bible School and in studies overseas. The line-drawings are the work of Bro. R. Flint, and, of course, the illustrations of the Temple of the Future Age are taken directly from Bro. Sulley's book.

Ern Wilson
June, 1987

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Ezekiel & His Message

— E. Wilson

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HISTORICAL SETTING & CHRONOLOGY

With the death of the reforming Josiah, the nation of Israel, already reduced to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, entered upon its final 23 years of troubled existence before it finally fell to Nebuchadnezzar's armies. The decline in Spiritual, Moral and Political values was swift and dramatic.

The faithful spokesmen of Yahweh remonstrated in vain, and His long-threatened punishments — “delayed” by the pleas and faithful service of men like Hezekiah and Josiah and even (such is His longsuffering mercy) by the repentance and remorse of such an evil man as Manasseh — fell with terrible effect.

It was not a single catastrophe. The several records are not easy to put together, but they seem to resolve as follows —

1. Jehoahaz carried to Egypt	2 Kings 23:31-33 2 Chron. 36:1-3	B.C. 609
2. 3rd Jehoiakim (1st Nebuchadnezzar)	2 Kings 24:1 Daniel 1:1 (cf. 2:1)	605
3. “Bands to destroy”	2 Kings 24:2	several
4. 11th Jehoiakim (7th Nebuchadnezzar)	2 Chron. 36:4-7 Jer. 52:28	598
5. 3 mths later — Jehoiachin	2 Kings 24:10-16 Ezek. 1:2; 2 Chron. 36:9-10	597
6. 11th Zedekiah (18th Nebuchadnezzar)	2 Kings 25:1-11	587
7. 19th Nebuchadnezzar	Jer. 52:12-27	586
8. 23rd Nebuchadnezzar	Jer. 52:30	582

The dates shown are those generally accepted, but must not be taken as dogmatic assertions. Similarly the lists and charts that follow quote dates for clarification purposes only —

1. The *Brief Historical Survey*.
2. The *Relativity Chart*.
3. The *Diagrammatic Chart*.

These establish Ezekiel as prophesying between B.C. 592 and 570; a period of 22 years, and they show how he was related in point of time to other prophets and authorities.

Brief Historical Survey

JEWISH PEOPLE SURROUNDING KINGS & NATIONS

Years	Reference	Prophets/Kings	
BC			
640-609		Josiah	
626-606			BABYLONIA
612			Nabopolassar Medes (Cyaxerxes) & Babylonians combine to defy & remove yoke of Assyria. Nineveh falls.
609	2 Kgs. 23:29	Death of Josiah . Jehoahaz succeeds.	Egypt (Necho) to help of Assyria. Unsuccessful.
	2 Kgs. 23:31-33	Jehoahaz deposed by Necho on his return journey.	
609-598	2 Kgs. 23:34	Jehoiakim enthroned by Necho.	
606	Dan. 1:1; Jer. 25:1; 2 Kgs. 24:1		Necho's army at Carchemish defeated by Crown Prince Nebuchadnezzar, who follows to Egypt, taking loyalty oath & captives (Daniel) from Jehoiakim. On father's death, returns home.
605			
603	2 Kings 24:1	Jehoiakim revolts; Nebuchadnezzar moves against him, but allows him to remain on throne	Nebuchadnezzar 605-562
598-597	2 Kings 24:8-16; Ezek. 1:2; Est. 2:5-6	Death of Jehoiakim. Jehoiachin 3 mths. taken to Babylon (Ezekiel).	
597	2 Kings 24:17	Zedekiah 597-587	
592	Ezek. 1:2	Ezekiel's 1st Vision	
588	2 Kings 25:1	Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem begins.	
587-586	2 Kings 25:3-9; Jer. 39:1-2	Walls breached; Temple burnt; "Great captivity" begins.	

585			Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Tyre begins.
570	Ezek. 29:17-21	Ezekiel's last vision	Tyre subdued; not conquered. Egypt invaded.
562	Jer. 52:31		Death of Nebuchadnezzar (age 84). Evil-Merodach 562-560
560			Neriglissar 560-556
556			Labashi-Marduk
556	Daniel 5:7		Nabonidus 556-539; then with Belshazzar 553-539
			MEDO-PERSIA
559			Cyrus ascends throne of Persia
550			Cyrus conquers Media; joins two nations.
539			Babylon falls; <i>Darius</i> 'the Mede' 539-538.
538	Dan. 5:30		Cyrus takes throne of Babylon 538-530
537	2Chron. 36:22-23 Ezra 1:1-4	Decree to build Temple Death of Daniel?	
536	Ezra 3:1-3	7th month Altar set up in Jerusalem.	
535	Ezra 4:1-4,24	2nd month. Temple foundations laid. Work languishes. Samaritan opposition	
530	Ezra 4:7-22		Death Cyrus. <i>Cambyses</i> 530-522 stops Temple work.
525			<i>Cambyses</i> conquers Egypt
522			Death <i>Cambyses</i> . <i>Smerdis</i> (Gomates)
521			<i>Smerdis</i> deposed. <i>Darius</i> Hystaspes 521-488
521-519	Ezra 5	Haggai/Zechariah Zerubbabel/Joshua Tatnai (v. 3); Letter to Darius (vv. 7-17); Reply (ch. 6:1-12— "Proceed")	Babylonian revolt subdued Vashti deposed.
518-516			2nd Babylonian revolt crushed in 2 yrs.
515	Ezra 6:15-22 Esther 2:16	Temple finished. Zerubbabel disappears from the record	Esther marries—10th mth.
511	Esther 3:7; 9		Haman's plot—1st mth. Purim—12th mth.
499			Wars between Persia & Greece commence.
488			Death of Darius. <i>Xerxes</i> 488-465

486	Ezra 4:6	Complaint to Xerxes	Egypt revolts; subdued in 2 yrs.
465			Death of Xerxes. <i>Artaxerxes I</i> (Longimanus) 465-424
459	Ezra 7:1-9; 11-26	“Restore Temple service”.	
446	Dan. 9:25; Neh. 1:2	9th mth — News from Jerusalem. Nehemiah authorised rebuild walls.	20th of Artaxerxes
445	Neh. 2:1-7:4	Nehemiah to Jerusalem 1st month. Opposition of Sanballat. 6th month, Walls finished.	
433	Neh. 13:6	Nehemiah returns to Shushan.	
430(?)	Neh. 13:6	Back to Jerusalem	
424		Malachi prophesies	Death of Artaxerxes. <i>Xerxes II</i> (8 mths). <i>Darius II</i> 424-405 (Nothus).
405			Death of Darius II <i>Artaxerxes II</i> (Mnenon) 405-359
359			Death of Artaxerxes II. <i>Artaxerxes III</i> (Othus) 359-338
338			Death of Artaxerxes III
336			<i>Arses</i> 338-336
			Death of Arses <i>Darius III</i> (Codomanus) 336-331
334			GREECE Philip of Macedonia succeeded by his son <i>Alexander</i> 336-323 defeats Persians at Granicus.
333			Alexander defeats Persians at Issus.
331			Death of Codomanus. Alexandria founded. Alexander takes Tyre & Jerusalem; finally defeats Persians at Arbela.
323			Death of Alexander. “Era of the Greeks” 12 yrs. of civil strife.

Dan. 11

King of North
(Seleucid)

323-281: Seleuchus I
(Nicator)

281-261: Antiochus I

King of South
(Ptolemaic)

323-285: Ptolemy I
(Soter)

285-245: Ptolemy II

		(Soter) 261-246: Antiochus II (Theos) 246-226: Seleuchus II (Callinicus) 226-223: Seleuchus III (Ceranus)	(Philadelphus) 245-221: Ptolemy III (Euergetes)
167	Antiochus IV pollutes the Sanctuary. Mattathias slays sacrifice offerer.	223-187: Antiochus III (The Great) 187-175: Seleuchus IV (Philopater)	221-203: Ptolemy IV (Philopator) 203-181: Ptolemy V (Epiphanes)
163	Judas Maccabeus appointed Govr. of Judea. revolts. Maccabean epoch, until war between Aristobus II & Hyrcanus II Mattathias followed by sons Judas, Jonathan, Simon. Then down Simon's line through John Hyrcanus I to rival brothers Hyrcanus II & Aristobulus II.	175-163: Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) Antiochus V (Eupator) 163-162: Demetrius I (Soter) 162-151: Alexander Bala 151-139: Demetrius II (Nicator) and 129-125 125-69: Family feuds — no clear picture until	181-145: Ptolemy VI (Philometor) 169-164: Ptolemy VIII (Euergetes II) and 145-116 145 Ptolemy VII (Neos) 116-107: Cleopatra III & Ptolemy IX (Soter)
69/67	Aristobulus the victor, but Pompey favoured Hyrcanus & defeated Aristobulus. The two families united in marriage & daughter Mariamne married Herod (the Great)	69-65: Antiochus XIII last of the line.	107-101: Cleopatra III & Ptolemy X (Alexander I) 101-88: Ptolemy X & Berenice. 88-80: Ptolemy IX restored 80: Ptolemy XI (Alexander) 80-51: Ptolemy XII (Auletes)
65		Rome in Control	
41	Death of Hyrcanus		51-30: Cleopatra VII & her associates

41-37

Antigonus (son
of Aristobulus
II)

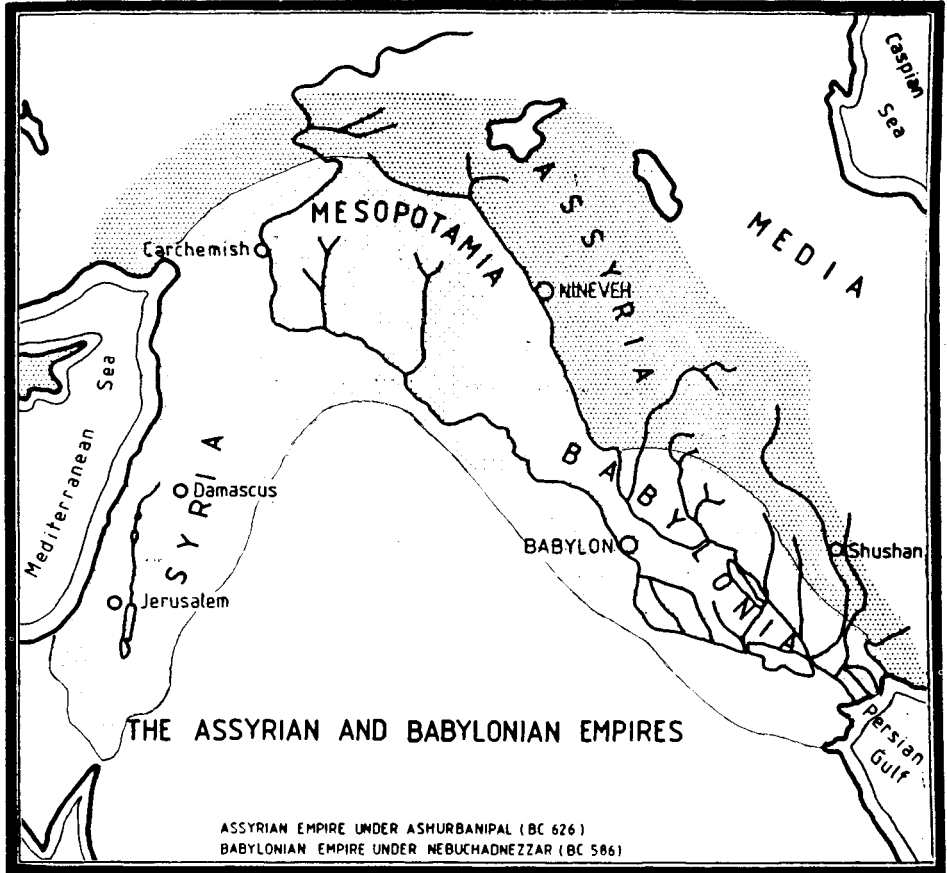
Rome in control

37-4

Herod the
Idumean—
appointed by
Roman Senate

5

Birth of Christ.



Relativity Chart

B.C.	KINGS		PROPHETS			Zephaniah 1-3
	Judah	Babylon/Persia	Jeremiah	Ezekiel	Daniel	
640-609	Josiah					
627			1-12			
609-598	Jehoiakim		13-20(?),22 23(?);26;35			
605-562		Nebuchadnezzar			Taken captive	
605			25;36;45		1	
603					2-3	
597	Jehoiachin		24	Taken captive		
597-586	Zedekiah		27-29			
592				1-7		
591				8-19		
590				20-23		
588			21;30;31; 34;37;38	24		
587			32;33	29:1-16		
586			39;40	25-28;30 31;33:21-33		
585			41-44 52	32-39 (excl. 33:21-33)		
572				40-48		
570				29:17-21		
565					4	
562-560		Evil Merodach				
560-556		Neriglissar				
556		Labassi-Narduk				
556-539		Nabonidis				
553-539		Belshazzar				
553					7	
552					8	
539-538		Darius			5;6;9;11;12	
538		Cyrus			10	

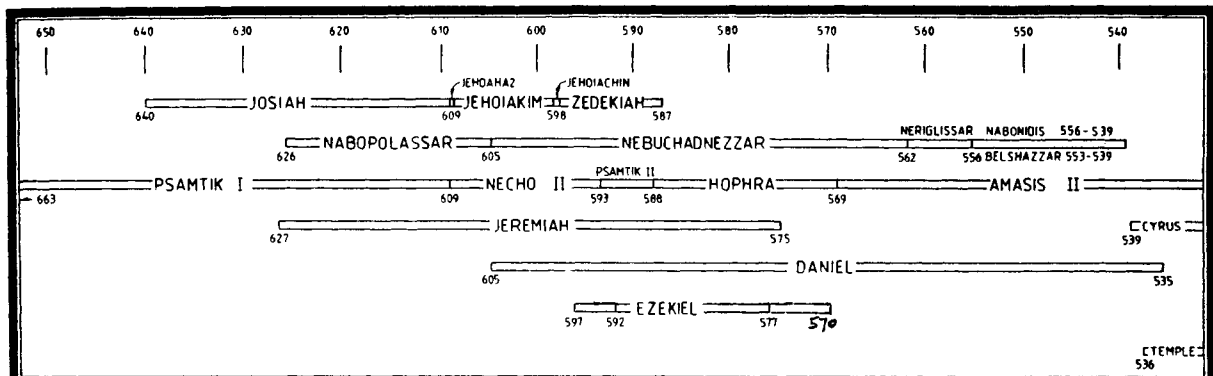
Jeremiah's prophecies are extremely difficult to place in chronological order, and it is very likely that some of the above listing is incorrect. Additionally, the general indictments against the surrounding nations (chapters 46-51) are not listed at all, as there is no way at all of establishing when they were made.

Ezekiel carefully dates some of his visions, but it is still necessary at times to decide whether some chapters are a continuation of a vision, or form a later "Word of Yahweh".

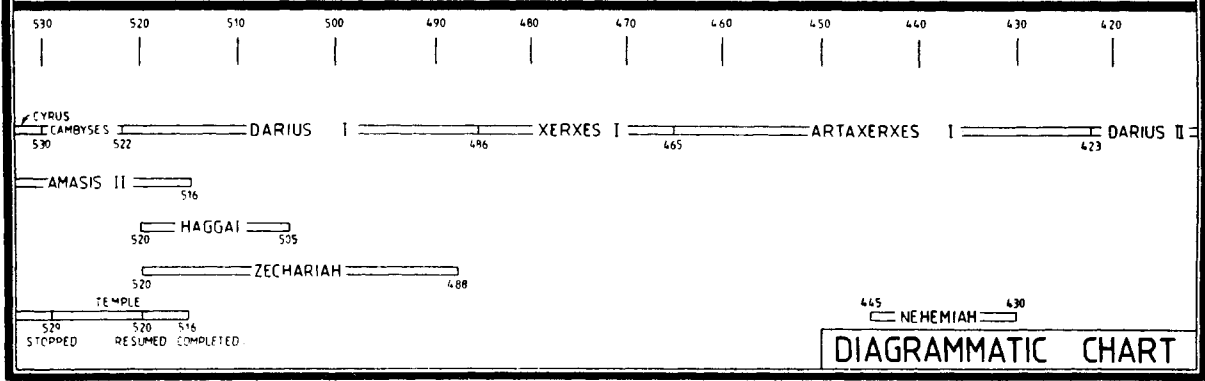
Daniel is very precise, except as regards Ch. 4. It does not seem possible to place this at the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's reign for two reasons —

1. verse 30 "great Babylon that I have built"
2. Nebuchadnezzar was mad for 7 years — surely not when he was conquering the nations.

For these reasons Ch. 4 has been placed in the later years of his life, when he could view his accomplishments with pride.



8



OF PERSONS AND PEOPLES

Two Men Dominate the Book of Ezekiel

1. Ezekiel himself, who in actions was a “man of sign”.
2. Nebuchadnezzar, who, remarkably, is mentioned by name 4 times only in the book; but yet whose actions as the leader of the Babylonians are inextricably bound up with what Ezekiel portrayed relative to his own people and those of other nations.

Ezekiel

Name

Heb. *Yehezqel* — Yah will strengthen (e.g. 1:3).

Family

He was the son of Buzi, a priest. This comes from Buz — *contempt*, a name mentioned in 3 other places —

1. Genesis 22:21 — the second son of Nahor & Milcah.
2. 1 Chron. 5:14 — in the genealogies of the tribe of Gad.
3. Jer. 25:23 — one of the 3 tribes of northern Arabia.

Additionally, in Job 32:2,6 Elihu is called “the son of Barachel the Buzite.”

Ezekiel, then was a son of those who had held in contempt the covenant they had made with their God (as stated in 16:59; 22:8 — where Heb. *bazah* — *despised*). But even in such circumstances, Yahweh does not leave Himself without witnesses, and Ezekiel had received a careful upbringing in a faithful home.

Associations

Jeremiah, who also was a priest, had been prophesying in Jerusalem for 29 years before Ezekiel went into captivity. No doubt the lad had heard and spoken to the faithful man, and had learned much — c.f. Ezekiel 13 & Jeremiah 23:9-32.

Daniel had been taken into captivity about 7 years before Ezekiel was taken. There is no way of knowing whether they were acquainted personally, but there seems a reasonable possibility that they were — Jerusalem was not large, and faithful families in an unfaithful community would tend to mix for mutual comfort and strength, as happens today. Ezekiel certainly knew Daniel later on by reputation, at least (Ezek. 14:14,20; 28:3).

Personal Details & Character

He rarely alludes to his own life, apart from what he was required by Yahweh to do.

He was taken into captivity with Jehoiachin 598 BC (2 Kings 24:15; Ezek. 1:2) with the “mighty of the land”. This was about 7 years after Daniel was taken and 11 years before Jerusalem fell. “The Word of Yahweh came” to him 5 years later. He lived at least until the 27th year of his exile (Ezek. 29:27), so his prophesying extended over a period of 22 years. He was married (happily so — see “the desire of thine eyes” in 24:16), and his wife died on the day Nebuchadnezzar set his final siege against Jerusalem, in the 9th year of his captivity.

Ezekiel was a man of faith, who felt deeply the sufferings of his people; but he was unyielding in his adherence to the Divine standpoint, and therefore harshly critical of the sins of his own nation. He acknowledged the equity of Yahweh’s judgments. He endured hardships and privations in the signs he enacted as warnings to his people, and seems never to have complained.

Place of Exile

The Assyrians had begun the practice of transporting thousands of captive peoples from their homelands and re-settling them elsewhere. It made good political sense in days when every nation was inextricably bound to its land and its gods. It broke their spirit and their sense of nationality (see 2 Kings 17:23-33).

The Babylonians carried on the practice, and Ezekiel thus found himself re-settled “by the river of Chebar”, amongst his own people. This appears to have been a canal, one of the royal canals of Nebuchadnezzar, apparently close to Babylon. Some claim it was some 200 miles north of Babylon at Gozan on the river Habor, where some of Israel had been settled earlier (2 Kings 17:6). Others claim that it was much nearer to Babylon itself — e.g.

“The Nahr Malcha, on the excavation of which it is supposed that the Jewish captives were employed for a time” (Psalm 137:1 is associated with this).

“The Ka-ba-ri, or Grand Canal, 120 feet wide, close to which were discovered the archives of the wealthy banking house of Murashu & Sons (dated 464 to 405 BC) which contain many Jewish names” (see Keller — “The Bible as History” p. 284; The Companion Bible note to Ezekiel 1:3).

It was here that Ezekiel saw his earlier visions, “among them of the captivity at Tel Abib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar” (Ezek. 3:15). It does seem likely that his own home, on the banks of the Chebar, was some distance from Tel Abib, where the leaders of the Jewish exiles were settled — this is from a comparison of Ch. 1:3 and 3:15, where he says “I came to them . . . at Tel Abib.”

Nebuchadnezzar

Although he is mentioned four times only in the book of Ezekiel, the other great personality of the book is this king, who controlled the destiny of Ezekiel's life and also that of his people.

The references, remarkably, relate to Tyre and Egypt (26:7; 29:18; 29:19; 30:10).

Name

“Nebo, defend the boundary”.

Family

The son of Nabopolassar, the first independent king of Babylon. Until he proclaimed his throne to be independent in 626 BC, the southern Babylonians had been subservient to the Assyrians in the northern land between Euphrates and Tigris. It was on the death of Ashurbani-pal (669-627) that Nabopolassar took this action, and he strengthened his position under the weak rulers who succeeded to the throne in Nineveh — to such an extent that Nineveh fell to Babylon in BC 612 (in association with the Medes and Scythians).

Nebuchadnezzar had become Babylon's man of war; he had married the daughter of Cyaxerxes, king of the Medes, and an alliance was formed.

Personal History

He quickly came into conflict with Egypt, and consequently with the Egyptian-held territories between the two countries. With the declining power of Assyria, Tsamtik I (663-609 BC) of Egypt consolidated his hold on Palestine and Syria, and extended his influence as far north as Carchemish. He was succeeded by Necho II (609-593 BC). Friendly relationships now existed between Nineveh and Egypt and when, in 609 BC Necho marched northward in a last desperate move to rescue Assyria, he was met by Josiah, who lost his life at Megiddo. Necho failed at Harran, and returned to Egypt, on the way removing Jehoahaz from the throne in Jerusalem and replacing him with Jehoiakim.

In 606 BC Nebuchadnezzar made a surprise attack on the Egyptian army based at Carchemish, and routed it completely. He pursued the enemy to the border of Egypt, where he learned of his father's death, and he returned home with speed to claim the throne. The next year he invested Jerusalem and received Jehoiakim's formal submission. Daniel was taken. Four years later, Nebuchadnezzar again attacked Egypt, but was repulsed. Jehoiakim and other vassals assumed a weakness, and withheld tribute, but in 598 BC Nebuchadnezzar returned. Jehoiakim died as the march began and his son Jehoiachin (Jeconiah) succeeded him. Within 3 months he was a captive, and his uncle Zedekiah (Mattaniah) was placed on the throne, a vassal to Babylon.

Zedekiah unwisely listened to the seduction of Psamtik II of Egypt, and rebelled. The destruction of Jerusalem followed in 587 BC and the Temple was burned down the next year.

Meanwhile, back in Babylon, the events of Daniel 1 to 3 took place (see Dan. 2:1) — between 605 BC & 603 BC approximately, and in Jerusalem many of Jeremiah's prophecies were spoken.

Along with Zedekiah, the rulers of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Zidon and Tyre rebelled. The first 4 were quickly dealt with, but a 13 year siege of Tyre was necessary before it was honourably subdued and resumed its tribute. Nebuchadnezzar then continued south, and attacked Egypt (now ruled by Hophra). He has left nothing on record, but an Egyptian inscription proves that he marched the whole length of Egypt-proper to Syene (the modern Aswan). A further invasion took place in the 37th year of his reign (from one of his own inscriptions). (See Ezek. 29:17-20). This was around 569 BC, when Amasis II dethroned and succeeded Hophra.

Jeremiah (49:28-33) also mentions a war against the Arabs of Kedar; and no doubt there were many others of which we have no record.

As well as being a great warrior, Nebuchadnezzar was a great builder (witness Dan. 4:30) — of course, using his captives as labour.

Personality

The man's character is a mystery. He was the king of a notoriously cruel people, and his revealed actions portray him as one with them (e.g. his actions with Zedekiah — 2 Kings 25:6-7, 18-21).

He was proud and conceited (Dan. 3; 4:30) to the point where he lapsed into madness (as sometimes happens with such men — as his own inscriptions record it “the seat of the kingdom did not rejoice my heart”).

He was superstitious — witness his concern over his dreams, and the manner in which he decided whether to attack Ammon or Jerusalem (Ezek. 21:21). Here he used 3 devices —

1. He “consulted teraphim” — images — by means of which his diviners gave him the “divine” decision
2. He “shook his arrows” — using a marked arrow in the way of drawing lots.
3. He looked into the liver of a slain animal — if the liver was healthy the omen was favourable; if not, it was unfavourable.

He was a worshipper of “gods many”, and one can only believe that his acknowledgment of Yahweh was but an exaltation of Him to a status comparable with his own gods.

It is an intriguing thought that while Daniel and his friends (who made no secret of their nationality or their allegiances), were in positions of power in Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar was perpetrating destruction & atrocities in their homeland. Obviously their influence was in local internal affairs only.

EGYPT

The other great national protagonist of Ezekiel's day was Egypt.

Its history recedes into the unrecorded past. It certainly was one of the earliest organised nations, at first consisting of two groups — Upper and Lower Egypt — later being combined as one.

Name

Kemet — the black land, from the dark-coloured Nile mud, in contrast with the red sands of the desert;

Called by the Canaanites Misri, or Mizraim (see Gen. 50:11);

Known to the Arabs as *Mizr* — red mud;

Known to the Israelites as “the land of Ham” (Psa. 105:23,27; 78:51), from the accepted fact that the descendants of Ham the son of Noah were the first to settle there, no doubt principally through his son Mizraim (Gen. 10:6). (It is interesting to note that the RSV even renders Mizraim as “Egypt” in this place);

Known to Israelites also by the “symbolical and poetical” name *Rahab* — insolence, pride, violence; to suggest the character of the “sea monster” (e.g. Psa. 87:4; 89:10; Isa. 51:9; cf. Ezek. 29:3; 32:2);

Known to the Greeks in very early times as *Aigyptios*.

It is said that English “Egypt” is derived from the Greek & Latin forms of the early name for the city of Memphis — *Ha-ku-ptah*.

History

Traditionally marked off in “Dynasties” from the history of Egypt as recorded by one Manetho, around 290 BC. He commences the first Dynasty in 2,900 BC. This would have been before the Flood, about the time of the birth of Noah, when men such as Cainan, Mahaleel, Jared, Methuselah and Lamech would still have been alive. No reliability can be placed on most of these historical records as devised by men, but it is certain that by Abraham's time (around 1995 BC to 1820 BC) Egypt was, by comparison with most other communities, a highly organised, sophisticated nation. This was the time of the so-called “Middle Kingdom” (1900 BC to 1750 BC) — the 12th Dynasty.

Joseph stood before Pharaoh around 1713 BC in the era of the Hyksos invaders, who are credited with the 15th to 17th Dynasties. The “new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph” would then be Ahmose I, who drove out the Hyksos, and established the 18th Dynasty.

Bible chronology establishes the Exodus as being around 1490 BC, within the period allocated to the 18th Dynasty (i.e. if Egyptology can be relied upon). The period 1570 BC to 1150 BC (Dynasties 18 to 20) was a time of great power for Egypt, and its influence was felt in distant parts. Near the end of this period, Ramses III repulsed the invading sea-peoples, who included the Philistines.

Then came a decline, with internal strife causing Egypt's foreign influence to wane. (At this time, also, Assyria was not pushing its influence in the west, largely because of pressure from the rising Aramean states which lay between it and the Mediterranean. It was in this lull in activity by the two great states of Assyria and Egypt, that David and Solomon were so successful in establishing the kingdom of Israel).

The Libyans conquered Egypt, and held it for a time (Dynasties 22 to 24 — 945 BC to 712 BC). One of its rulers made a pact with Hoshea, the last king of Israel, in an endeavour to halt the spreading power of Assyria; but it failed — Israel went into captivity, and for a time even Egypt itself was under the control of the Assyrians. Then Tirhakah advanced against Assyria in support of Hezekiah.

A native Dynasty (26th — BC 712 to BC 525) succeeded, and Ezekiel's time falls within this period. Necho marched to support Assyria, and Josiah met his death BC 609; but the Egyptians were routed at Carchemish by Nebuchadnezzar (note — Egypt now supported Assyria, as it was more afraid of the rising power of Babylon).

Religion

It is claimed that Egypt's religion was at first monotheistic (which is understandable), but it soon became "an utterly bewildering polytheistic conglomeration", in which almost anything, animate or inanimate, was worshipped. Ra was the sun-god; Osiris, god of the Nile, became the god of fertility; the moon was worshipped; there was a god of night, a god of death; and so on. Most were represented by animals - Ra by a hawk; Osiris by a goat; etc

The plagues of the Exodus were "against all the gods of Egypt, to execute judgment".

A remarkable claim is that circumcision was practised in Egypt as early as the 4th Dynasty, around 2,500 BC, when it is thought the great Pyramids were built, and some 500 years before Abraham was born.

EDOM

Name

Edom is otherwise known as Idumea — red. It was the name given in Scripture to Esau, after he had bartered his birthright with Jacob for a mess of “red” pottage (Gen. 25:30). It is remarkable that the country subsequently given to Edom is wild, rugged, largely inaccessible, and red (Deut. 2:5).

Country

The area thus allocated to Edom embraced about 100 miles north/south, and 20 miles west/east, stretching from the bottom of the Dead Sea to Ezion-geber at the tip of the Gulf of Elath. The main centres were Bozrah, Sela, Teman, Ezion-Geber. The “rose-red city of Petra” still stands as a monument to the inheritance of Esau (much changed, of course, by successive inhabitants — Nabateans; Romans; Arabs).

History

There was a perpetual hatred of Israel in the hearts of the Edomites, stemming from that of Esau for his brother Jacob.

Esau had expelled the Horites from Seir (Deut.2:12), and his descendants were well established there by the time of the Exodus. Moses made formal request for permission to pass through the land, and was summarily refused, on threat of war (Num. 20:18-21). And as he had been expressly instructed not to “meddle” with the “children of Esau” (Deut. 2:4-5), he had no choice but to move northward along the western edge of their land to the Dead Sea and the Brook Zered (v. 8 cf. Numb. 33:35-46).

Nothing more is heard of them in Scripture until Saul defeated them (1 Saml. 14:47). David and Joab followed this with a decisive victory in the valley of Salt. (1 Saml. 8:13-14) — “Syrians” should read “Edomites” — 1 Kings. 11:15-16; Ps. 60:8-12). In the reign of Jehoshaphat a revolt was attempted, but failed by Divine intervention (11 Chron. 20:22); a later revolt succeeded in the time of Jehoram (11 Chron. 21:8). Amaziah had some success against them, but could not subdue them completely (2 Kings. 14:7; 2 Chron. 25:11-17)

The act that brought Yahweh’s condemnation through His prophets was their joining with Nebuchadnezzar against Judah, and the cruelty they showed then. As a reward for this help, Nebuchadnezzar allowed them to settle in the south of Palestine; but at the same time they were driven out of their own possession by the Nabateans. The Maccabeans again subdued them, and forced the Jewish religion upon them, so incorporating them into the Jewish nation.

Religion

They were idolators (2 Chron. 25:14-20), and it appears they indulged in human sacrifice.

Moab

Name

Moab was the son of Lot's elder surviving daughter; his name is thought to mean "from a father".

Country

From Deut. 2:9-11 we learn that they drove the Emim from the rich highlands on the eastern side of the Dead Sea, and established themselves there between the Brook Zered and the River Arnon, bounded on the south by Edom and on the north by Ammon (see also Num. 21:13; Judges. 11:18). Their holding had extended northward to Heshbon, but they had been driven below Arnon by the warlike Amorites (Num. 21:26) — a descendant of Canaan (Gen. 10:16).

History

Like Edom and Ammon, they had been "given" their territory by Yahweh, and Moses was forbidden to molest them (Deut. 2:9-11). But they were not prepared to assist Israel, except to make a profit commercially (see Num. 25:1-3). Their king Balak, frightened by the size of the host, hired Balaam to curse them (Num. 22-24) and then the Moabites mingled with and corrupted many in Israel. As a result along with the Ammonites, they were excluded from Israel to the tenth generation, (compared with Edomites "in their third generation" — "for he is thy brother" — See Deut. 23:3-8). Ruth was of Moab, and David her great-grandson had friendly relations with Moab at first. (1 Sam. 22:3-4). But something stirred up enmity between them — perhaps they worried about the rising threat of a unified nation. David subdued them completely (2 Sam. 8:2), and they were tributary until the death of Ahab, when they revolted, but were again defeated by a confederacy of Israel, Judah, and Edom (why Edom? — being under tribute to Jehoshaphat of Judah, they were conscripted soldiers). — See 2 Kings 3. It is interesting to note that Moab became vassal to Israel, not Judah, after the nation divided (v.4)

On another occasion, Moab joined with Ammon and Edom to try to break the hold of Judah under Jehoshaphat, but they failed (2 Chron. 20).

The famed Moabite stone, discovered in 1868, records the revolt of Mesha, king of Moab, as being a great victory, and ascribing it to his god, Chemosh.

Moab seems to have recovered as Israel declined and we have Isaiah speaking of Moab as "proud" and rich (ch. 15-16); and Jeremiah telling how Moab is "at ease, and settled on his lees" (Ch. 48). And many Jews fled there, as well as to Ammon and Edom, to escape from Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 40:11-12) — a story to be repeated when Gog comes down!

Religion

The national god was Chemosh, and the Moabites seem to have been fanatical devotees. It seems to have been a horrible and cruel service, with rites involving the sacrifice of children (see 2 Kings 3:26-27).

Ammon

Name

When Lot's second surviving daughter gave birth to a son, she called him Ben-Ammi — "son of my people". He developed into a race of people, called after him, Ammonites — inbred (Gen. 19:38; Deut. 2:20). They seem to have been more of a nomadic type of people than were the descendants of his half-brother, Moab. But the two tribes remained closely connected (See eg. Deut. 23:2-4).

Country

The Ammonites settled to the east of Jordan, north of Moab, bounded by the Arnon in the south and the Jabbok in the north. But they were soon pushed further to the east by the Amorites, who thus were found on both sides of Jordan. Like Edom and Moab, they were protected from the children of Israel under Moses, because Yahweh had "given" them their land (Deut. 2:19-21) at the expense of the Zamzumim.

History

Their history as it related to Israel is very much parallel with that of Moab — one of continual hostility. At different times they joined with Moab (Deut. 23:3-4); with Moab and Amalek (Judges 3:13); with Syria (2 Sam. 10:1-19); with Gebal and Amalek (Psalm 83:7) against Israel.

Rome swallowed them all up, and while they retained their identity for a time, they eventually merged with the Arabs.

Religion

Like Moab, they worshipped idols — their main deity being Molech, "a detestable Semitic deity honoured by the sacrifice of children, in which they were caused to pass through or into a fire". This idol, expressly forbidden to Israel (Deut. 18:21) was the downfall of many (Acts 7:43). Solomon built an altar for his Ammonitess wife, the mother of Rehoboam, in the Valley of Hinnom; Josiah desecrated it; Jehoiakim revived it. And Yahweh's vengeance fell on both Ammon and Israel.

Tyre

Name

Said to mean “a rock” (in Heb. *tzor* — see Joshua 19:29 *mgn*; in Greek “*turos*”)

Country

Part of the coastal strip called Phoenicia, never more than 200 miles long, and but a few miles wide to the high country of the Lebanese mountains. Rich alluvial soil and two of the very few safe harbours along this coast — at Tyre and at Zidon.

History

The Tyrians, with the Zidonians, were basically of Hamitic descent through Caanan (see Gen. 10:15) though it appears, with an admixture of Semites. An inscription in an Egyptian Papyrus of the 14th century BC (shortly after Joshua’s death) mentions Tyre as a city on an island. They were mariners unmatched in their times, shipbuilders and wood — craftsmen supreme. They colonized in many places — Carthage and Tarshish as examples. The early Israelites squeezed them but never succeeded in conquering them (the territory is allocated to Naphtali — Gen. 49:13 — in the age to come; but to Asher under Joshua — Josh. 19:24-31). Hiram king of Tyre was a notable man, and a good friend of David and Solomon. Ahab married a woman who was a Phoenician with a Tyrian/Zidonian heritage.

But it seems that religious and commercial considerations eventually spoiled this accord. In the middle of the 8th century Yahweh through Joel and Amos condemned and threatened both Tyre and Zidon for stealing His riches and for selling His people as slaves (Joel 3:4-8); Amos 1:9-10). Other prophets continued the denunciations (Isa. 23; Jer. 25; and especially Ezekiel 26, 27, 28; Amos 1; Zech. 9.

Josiah was a scourge of the gods of the Phoenicians and earned their hatred. How they would have rejoiced at the destructions of Nebuchadnezzar — until he turned his attentions to them also! The story of this is taken up in the notes on Ezekiel 26 to 28.

Religion

To quote Unger — “Canaanish cults, which we now know from the Ras Shamra literature of the 14th Century BC to be effete and morally debasing, helped to make Tyre a profligate, self-centred, opulent and worldly-wise city. The cult of Melcarth was firmly established for many centuries”. The supreme deity was El and his son Baal (“the one who prevails”); their abominable sex goddesses Anath, Astarte, Ashera. They ruined many in Israel — Ahab being the pre-eminent example (1 Kings 16:31-33); Solomon another (1 Kings 11:5-8). Is it any wonder Yahweh pronounced judgment upon them?

Zidon

Name

Derives from the firstborn son of Canaan (Gen. 10:15), called in the Av. margin Tzidon; in the Greek form Sidon. The name means “fishing” or “fishery”, an appropriate name for the town that took this name.

History

It is accepted that Zidon was established before Tyre, and indeed it was known as the “mother of Tyre” (Isa. 23:12). The area was known to the Hebrews as the land of the Zidonians long before it acquired the name “Phoenicia” (see Deut. 3:9). “Phoenicia” is the Greek designation, thought to mean “the land of palms” or alternatively to mean “shipbuilders” from the ancient Egyptian “fenkhu,” rendered by the Greeks as “phoinikes”, in turn rendered in English as “Phoenicians;” or again, from the Greek “phoinix”, meaning “dark red” or “purple”, and referring to the famous dye obtained from the “murex” (Tyrian sea-snails).

In many ways the history of Tyre and Zidon runs parallel although they were bitter rivals. Being only 20 miles apart, it was inevitable that they would be affected together by the movements of the nations around them. And for the most part it was inevitable also that they both would be opposed to Israel. At one time the Zidonians oppressed Israel (Jud. 10:12). The only times Zidon is mentioned as being friendly — disposed to Israel were when commercial advantage was to be gained — in David’s preparation for the temple (1 Chron. 22:4); and when they were under direction by their overlords, the Persians, to assist Zerubbabel and Joshua (Ezra 3:7)

Tyre seems to have become superior to Zidon (see Isa. 23:2) where Zidon is said to replenish Tyre. Zidon was tributary to Assyria from the time of Asshur-nasipal II (BC 883 — 859); it revolted in the reign of Shalmanezar III (859 — 823), with something of a stale-mate resulting from the subsequent fighting; but it was subjugated by Sennacherib (705-681), along with Tyre before that monarch attacked Palestine and Jerusalem, (2 Chron 32).

Zidon led another revolt against Esarhaddon (681-669), and he in vengeance completely destroyed it. It was rebuilt and again rebelled (with others), when the Babylonians replaced the Assyrians. Nebuchadnezzar quelled the rebellion. Under the Persians, Zidon became the chief city of the area, and again led a revolt — again with disastrous results in BC 351 (40,000 are said to have been incinerated). Again, a gradual recovery took place — the physical situation of the city demanded it — and in the days of Jesus both Tyre and Sidon were flourishing still, under Rome. Of the denunciations of the Hebrew prophets, it is not necessary to add to what has been stated concerning Tyre.

Religion

What has been stated concerning Tyre applies also to Zidon.

Philistia

Name

Probably means "Wanderers".

Country

The name Palestine derives from Philistine, which in turn developed from "Peleset" or "Peleste", the name by which they called themselves. They were of the "Sea peoples" who migrated, probably under pressure, from the region of the Grecian islands, principally Crete. After being repelled from Egypt by Ramses III at the beginning of the 12th Century BC, they obtained a foothold on the coast of the eastern Mediterranean, and held an area some 50 miles long and 10 to 20 miles wide on the rich soil there. At one stage they went as far north as Sidon, attacked and defeated it; and some of their number remained and were assimilated by the Phoenicians; but for the most part they remained within the confines of this coastal strip.

History

There were Philistine settlements around the River Gerar (below Gaza) in the time of Abraham (Gen. 20:1; cf. 21:32) — around 1900 BC., but the main invasion came around 1200 BC. Jeremiah speaks of the Philistines as "the remnant of the country (margin "isle") of Caphtor" (Jer. 47:4); Amos similarly (9:7); while Moses speaks of "the Caphtorim, which came forth out of Caphtor" destroying the Avim of Arabia (Deut. 2:23); and in Gen. 10:14 we learn of one of the sons of Mizraim (Egypt RSV) being "Casluhim (out of whom came Philistim)", and another being "Caphtorim."

So it is evident that while no dogmatic assertions can be made, the likelihood is that these people spread far and wide, with the main groups being first in Cyprus and Canaan, and then concentrated under outside pressures, in what became known as Philistia.

They were a constant menace to Israel. They had set up 5 fortress towns — Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, on the coast, and Gath and Ekron strategically placed inland. Their territory was allocated to Dan, Judah, and Simeon, but was never conquered by them (even David could not do it completely). In the times of the Judges and into Saul's reign they possessed one great advantage — the knowledge of iron-smelting and the production of iron weapons. They captured the Ark and slew Saul (far to the north in Israel territory, in the Valley of Esdraelon). They attacked David as soon as he became king, and he defeated them twice in the first of his 7 campaigns (2 Sam 5:17-25 : 8:1) capturing Gath. Solomon had a temporary ascendancy but it was lost by Rehoboam.

But Philistine power, like Israel's, was waning. Philistia lay on the road between Assyria and Egypt, and the constant movements between the two great powers inevitably involved the Philistines. They were conquered by Assyria, regained their independence, and lost it again to Tiglath-Pileser. Sargon moved against Egypt and took Ashdod (Isa. 20). The Egyptians conquered the country; then the Scythians overran it on their way to Egypt. Necho moved through on the way to Megiddo, where Josiah died, and besieged Gaza on his way back — and so on through Nebuchadnezzar's Western campaigns, until finally they disappear.

Religion

The chief god was Dagon, the fish god, with the trunk of a fish, head and hands as human. It was said to have been imported from Mesopotamia as the god of grain and agriculture. The Philistines were devoted and superstitious in their veneration of this god. They also worshipped Ashtareth (2 Sam. 31:10) or Astarte the goddess of Phoenicia — akin to the goddess Ishtar of Babylonia, the goddess of sensual love and of war; and Baal-Zebub (2 Kings 1:2-16) — variously the god of rain, storm and flies.

DOMINATING EXPRESSIONS

The phrase that dominates the whole book, and summarises the reason for its preservation in the Scripture is: "*They shall know that I am Yahweh*" — It is found in that form 62 times, and in other phrases with the same import 12 times.

What a significant statement this is in the context of Ezekiel's prophecies.

1. Of the nations we read in Jeremiah 10:25 — "they know thee not". But "I will magnify myself, and sanctify myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD" (Ezek. 38:23) "the Holy One in Israel" (Ezek. 38:7).

2. Of Israel we read in Jeremiah 4:22 — "My people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding". But "then shall they know that I am the LORD their God" (Elohim) — Ezek. 39:22,28 and elsewhere.

To "know" Yahweh (Heb. *yada*) is:—

Strong: to ascertain by seeing.

Gesenius: to come to the knowledge of, by seeing, by hearing, by experience.

Nelson: to have an intimate experiential knowledge.

It was to this kind of knowledge to which Jesus referred when, in the prayer recorded in John 17, he said "this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (The word he used was *ginosko* with the same intrinsic meaning as *yada* — an active relation and self-reference of the knower to the object of knowledge; a personal and true relation of the object known, such as will influence the knower").

In the manifestation of Yahweh — His Personality, His character, His majesty, His might — in Christ and the Saints glorified, the nations world-wide and Israel in their homeland, will come to "know" Yahweh.

Closely associated with this expression is the Divine Name and Title: *Adonai Yahweh* — rendered "Lord GOD" and implying "He Who shall be Rulers"; thereby intimating the means by which all shall know Him — through Christ and his saints the Rulers and Educators in the day the Glory of Yahweh is manifested.

A count in Young's Concordance shows that it is used in Ezekiel 220 times; rarely in any other of the prophets.

Another phrase which is the claim for Divine inspiration, and is the basis for the dependability of Ezekiel's prophecy is: "*The word of*

Yahweh came unto me, saying . . .” — It is found 50 times in these words, and on a number of other occasions Ezekiel uses the expressions — “*The hand of Yahweh was upon me*” — 7 times. “*And He said unto me*” — 40 times (two words are used for “said” — *amar*, and *dabar*, but they have the same import as used here).

Ezekiel is addressed by Yahweh 92 times as “*son of man*” — i.e. Hebrew *ben adam* — a son (as the builder of the family name) of an earthy or ruddy human being.

The definite article *the* is never used — he is *a* son in a general sense.

Ezekiel was a type of Christ, who, on 81 occasions in the A.V. speaks of himself as “*the son of man*” i.e. Greek *huios anthropos* — a son of a human being — but *the* one to regain what Adam lost.

In Matthew’s Gospel record 30 times.

In Mark’s Gospel record 15 times.

In Luke’s Gospel record 26 times.

In John’s Gospel record 10 times.

In addition, in John 12:34 others speak of him in the same way, but only in questioning Jesus’ own use of the term.

The commission given to Ezekiel as “son of man” epitomises and foreshadows that given to our Lord as “the son of man”, as priest Ch. 1:3; prophet Ch. 2:3-7; and watchman Ch. 3:16-21).

With these facts in mind, it is quite remarkable that the book of Ezekiel finds so little reflection in the New Testament — in fact, it does appear that there is not one *direct* quotation from it. There are, however, passages which seem to allude to statements in Ezekiel, without them being quotations. Among them may be listed —

Ch. 1 — the 4 living creatures Rev. 4:6-8.

Ch. 4:14 — the eating of unclean flesh Acts 10:14.

Ch. 9:4 — the mark on the foreheads of the faithful Rev. 7:3.

Ch. 12:2 — eyes to see; ears to hear;

the son of man in a rebellious house Matt. 13:13-15; Mark 8:18

Ch. 17:22-24 — Yahweh’s “tree” — a shelter for all Mark 4:30-32

Ch. 20:46-48 — “green trees” destroyed by fire of Yahweh; the “dry tree” of Messiah’s day consumed Luke 23:31.

Ch. 21:26 — the low exalted; the high abased Matt. 23:12

Ch. 28:2-26 — Tyre and Zidon judged for wickedness; cities of Israel deserve even greater Matt. 11:21-22.

Ch. 32:7-8 — covered heavens, darkened stars; sign of Yahweh’s wrath falling Matt. 24:29-30

Ch. 34 — shepherds — false and true John 10:1-17

Ch. 37:24 — Wandering sheep, without a shepherd Mark 6:34
the Shepherd Who seeks his own Luke 19:10

the one shepherd who shall save all his flock — “one flock; one shepherd” John 10:16

Ch. 47 — Water from the Throne; the Wood of life Rev. 22.

BY ACTION AND BY PARABLE

Ezekiel's dumbness is an intriguing feature of the record. It lasted intermittently for at least 6½ years — from the 5th year of his captivity until he received news of the capture of Jerusalem (ch. 3:26-27; 24:27;33:21,22). During that time he was dumb except when he received a specific message to pass on verbally to his companions in exile. (Incidentally, one should note the strength he must have received from "the desire of his eyes" — his wife, during such a difficult time).

The question arises — was it a complete loss of the function of speech? It would seem so. The word used — "alam", means "to bind, to confine, tongue-tied, dumb, silent". It is used by David in Psalm 39:2,9 — "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth"; and of our Lord in Isaiah 53:7 — "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth"; and in every other usage has the same implication.

It was because of his dumbness that we have on record the exciting, dramatic pictures he was directed to create in relating Yahweh's message to His people —

1. The picture of the siege — Ch. 4:1-3,7; and the plight of the city's people during and after it — Ch. 4:4-6, 8-17.

2. The picture of Ezekiel cutting off his hair, weighing it, dividing it into 3 parts then indicating the destiny of the people in:

- (a) pestilence, famine
- (b) death by the sword
- (c) captivity

with but a very few being kept safe in Yahweh's "skirts" — ch. 5:1-12.

3. The picture of Ezekiel's "removing". He packed his few belongings as he had been compelled to do once before — and by his actions went forth into captivity. Then he dug through a wall and marched off, baggage on his shoulders, his face covered, his eyes downcast. It portrayed the fate of Zedekiah and his companions — Ch. 12:1-16.

4. Then Ezekiel ate his "bread with quaking" and his "water with trembling" to signify the want and famine that would come on the land of Judah — Ch. 12:17-20.

5. He illustrated the decision of Nebuchadnezzar to attack Jerusalem and its consequent misery with heart-rending "sighs" — N.E.B. "groan in their presence, man, groan bitterly until your lungs are bursting" — Ch. 21:6-7.

6. Then he illustrated Nebuchadnezzar making his decision, by marking two highways — one as leading to Amman and one as leading

to Jerusalem — and setting up a signpost to indicate the way to each; then indicating the way to Jerusalem — Ch. 21:19-27.

7. Then finally and tragically for Ezekiel, was the day of his wife's death. He was to give no sign of his mourning. What an ordeal it was for him! What a dramatic sign it must have been to them! Ch. 24:16-25.

8. But even now, with his beloved wife and helpmeet gone, it was 2 years short of the city's fall, and Ezekiel was still dumb. The final "sign" for his companions came with the dramatic news Ch. 33:21-22 cf. 24:26-27 — he was no longer dumb before them!

But if Ezekiel's actions were dramatic and picturesque, the verbal pictures he received and passed on were no less so. Note as examples the illustrations he used in the parables of:

1. the fruitless vine — Ch. 15
2. the foundling child, grown to be a whore — Ch. 16
3. the 2 eagles, vines, cedars — Ch. 17
4. the sour grapes — Ch. 18
5. the lioness and her whelps — Ch. 19:1-9
6. the planted vine — once fruitful; now dried and burnt — Ch. 19:10-14
7. the forest — destroyed by fire of Yahweh — Ch. 20:45-49
8. the sharpened sword — Ch. 21
9. Aholah & Aholibah — Ch. 23
10. the boiling pot — Ch. 24
11. Egypt as a crocodile in Yahweh's net — Ch. 32:1-16
12. the nations in Sheol — Ch. 32:17-32
13. shepherds false and true; a wayward flock — Ch. 34
14. the valley of dry bones — Ch. 37:1-14
15. the 2 sticks made one — Ch. 37:15-28

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET EZEKIEL

There are a number of ways in which the book may be divided. There may be, for example, the *Progressive Historical*:—

FIRST — *There are three major sections*

Chs. 1 to 24 predictions concerning Jerusalem made before the fall of Jerusalem, concerning its coming destruction.

Chs. 25 to 32 predictions concerning the nations surrounding Jerusalem.

(note — there are two parts to this section, not in sequence).

a. prophecies made before the city fell.

b. prophecies made after the city fell).

Chs. 33 to 48 predictions concerning Israel and the nations made after the city fell, concerning Israel's revival and the punishment of its enemies.

SECOND — *The divisions within each of the above sections.*

Chs. 1 to 24— The Judgment on Jerusalem for the sins of its people

1. Chs. 1 to 3:15 Ezekiel's call as a watchman

2. Chs. 3:16 to 7 *The general carrying out of this commission.*

3. Chs. 8 to 11 The rejection of the people, because of their idolatrous worship.

4. Chs. 12 to 19 The sins of the age rebuked in detail.

5. Chs. 20 to 23 The nature of the judgment and the sins that caused it.

6. Ch. 24 The meaning of the judgment now commenced.

Chs. 25 to 32 — *God's Judgment Pronounced on Seven Heathen Nations*

Before the fall of the city —

Ammon — Ch. 25:1-7.

Moab — Ch. 25:8-11

Edom — Ch. 25:12-14 (see later notes on Ch. 35).

Philistines — Ch. 25:15-17

Tyre — Ch. 26 to 28:19

Zidon — Ch. 28:20-24

Egypt — Ch. 29:1-16; 30; 31

After the fall of the city —

Egypt — Ch. 32; 29:17-21

Chs. 33 to 39 Prophecies of the restoration of Israel and the punishment of its enemies.

Chs. 40 to 48 The glorious consummation.

Then there is an alternative method, which may be called *the Schematic theme — The Cherubic Glory of Yahweh —*

Part 1 The “Glory” portrayed — its nature, mission and ultimate victory Ch. 1.

Part 2 The “Glory” departs — the reasons for, and description of the departure Chs. 2-11.

Part 3 In the “Glory’s” absence

1. Israel’s position and its fate foretold Chs. 12-24

2. Prophecies concerning the destiny of offending nations Chs. 25-32

Part 4 Preparation for the “Glory’s” return

Israel’s revival; Punishment of its enemies Chs. 33-39

Part 5 The “Glory” returns — The House of Prayer for all nations Chs. 40-48.

This is the method that will be followed in our consideration of the book.

But first we break up these 5 parts into smaller sections, then set out a suggested Chronological Order of Chapters.

Analysis

Part 1: The Glory Appears

Ch. 1 — The Vision of the Cherubim

Part 2: The Glory Departs: Judgment Proclaimed

Chs. 2-3 — “A Rebellious House” — Ezekiel commissioned to watch and warn. The eating of the “roll”.

Chs. 4-5 — Symbols of Judgment

Ch. 4 The mimic siege.

Ch. 5 The razored hair.

Chs. 6-7 — Jerusalem and the Land doomed;

A remnant to escape.

Chs. 8-9 — Reasons for judgment; its execution

Ch. 8 Idolatries

Ch. 9 The House defiled; the people slain.

Chs. 10-11 — The departure portrayed.

Part 3: (1) The Glory Departed — Israel’s Destiny.

Ch. 12 — The captivity of Zedekiah; the trembling prophet; the speedy judgment.

Chs. 13-14 — Yahweh’s indictment.

Ch. 13 Against false prophets and prophetesses.

Ch. 14 Against idolatrous elders.

Chs. 15-19 — Parables portraying Israel’s perfidy.

Ch. 15 The fruitless vine

Ch. 16 The foundling child become a whore

Ch. 17 The two eagles

Ch. 17 The wayward vine

Ch. 17 The planted cedar slip

Ch. 18 Sour grapes — fathers and children.

Ch. 19 The lioness and her whelps

Ch. 19 The wasted vine.

Ch. 20 — Israel’s long history of rebellion.

Chs. 21-24 — Against Jerusalem — destruction imminent.

Ch. 21 The sighing prophet and the sharpened sword

Ch. 22 Her sins so great; none can intercede.

Ch. 23 The whoredoms of Aholah and Aholibah.

Ch. 24 The punishment begins — the boiling pot; sign of the death of Ezekiel’s wife.

Part 3: (2) The Glory departed — The destiny of 7 enemy nations

Ch. 25 — Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia.

Ch. 26 to 28:19 — Tyre

Ch. 28:20-24 — Zidon

Ch. 29-32 — Egypt

Part 4: The Glory returning — Preparations therefore

Ch. 33 — Ezekiel re-commissioned — Warned people would hear but not heed.

Ch. 34 — Shepherds — false condemned; faithful promised

Chs. 35-39 — The coming conflict — nations versus Yahweh's Israel.

Ch. 35 "Edom" will be destroyed; man versus Yahweh.

Ch. 36 Israel comforted "for Mine holy Name".

Chs. 37-39 The means of accomplishment —

Ch. 37 Dry bones revived; Two sticks joined

Chs. 38-39 The battle joined; Yahweh victorious.

Part 5: The Glory returned

Chs. 40-43 — The Temple described; inhabited

Chs. 44-46 — Millennial worship prescribed.

Ch. 44 The priests — Of Zadok and Levi

Ch. 45 Division of the Land — Portion for the Sanctuary, Passover and Tabernacles re-instituted.

Ch. 46 Sacrifice & Offering revived.

Chs. 47-48 — The healing waters; the division of the land among its people; the Holy Oblation separated.

The Chart That Follows Shows

1. The suggested year BC of the prophecy.
2. The designated year of Ezekiel's captivity in which the prophecy was made. Where no year is designated, the contents of the chapter have been used as a means of placing it.
3. An epitome in few words of the contents of the chapter.
4. The "Schematic" Part into which the chapter falls.

SUGGESTED CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF CHAPTERS

Year BC	Ezekiel's Captivity			Reference	Event or Prophecy	Part
	Yr.	Mth.	Day			
592	5	4	5	Ch. 1	13th year Nebuchadnezzar.	
				Ch. 2-3	Vision Cherubic Glory	1
	5	4	5	Ch. 4	Call as prophet, watchman Against Jerusalem — type siege; famine	2
591	6	6	5	Ch. 5	Against Jerusalem — type hair; for rebellion	2
				Ch. 6-7	Against Jerusalem — punishment for idolatry; a remnant preserved	2
				Ch. 8	Against Jerusalem — 4 great abominations	2
				Ch. 9	Against Jerusalem — punishment; the just spared	2
				Chs. 10-11	The Glory leaves Jerusalem	2
				Ch. 12	Against Jerusalem — Zedekiah's captivity	3(1)
				Ch. 13	Against Jerusalem — prophets and prophetesses	3(1)
				Ch. 14:1-11	Against Elders of Israel	3(1)
				Ch. 14:12-23	Against Land & City — 4 sore judgments	3(1)
				Ch. 15	Against Jerusalem — parable fruitless vine	3(1)
				Ch. 16	Against Jerusalem — parable found- ling child; whore	3(1)
				Ch. 17	Against Jerusalem — parable 2 eagles, vine cedars	3(1)
				Ch. 18	Individual responsibility; parable sour grapes.	3(1)
590	7	5	10	Ch. 19	Against Princes — parable lioness and whelps and the wasted vine	3(1)
				Ch. 20	Elders rejected; historical iniquity retold	3(1)
				Ch. 21	Against Jerusalem — sighing prophet, sharpened sword	3(1)
				Ch. 22	Against Jerusalem — the sins of all the people	3(1)
				Ch. 23	Against Jerusalem — Aholah and Aholibah	3(1)
588	9	10	10	Ch. 24	Siege of Jerusalem begun; parables boiling pot, mourning prophet (death of wife)	3(1)
587	10	10	12	Ch. 29:1-16	Against Egypt — desolation	3(2)
				Ch. 30:1-19	Against Egypt — and her allies	3(2)

586	11	1	7	Ch. 30:20-26	Against Egypt — to fall to Babylonians	3(2)
	11	3	1	Ch. 31 Ch. 25	Against Egypt — to fall as Assyria fell Against Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia	3(2) 3(2)
	11		1	Ch. 26 to 28:19	Against Tyre	3(2)
	11		1	Ch. 28:20-26	Against Zidon	3(2)
	11	4	9		Wall of Jerusalem falls (2 Kings 25:2-3)	3(1)
*	11	10	5	Ch. 33:21-33	Receives news of fall of Jerusalem	3(1)
	585	12	1	Ch. 32:1-16	Against Egypt — Crocodile in Yahweh's net	3(2)
	12	1 or 12	15	Ch. 32:17-32	Against Egypt — to join predecessors in Sheol.	3(2)
				Ch. 33:1-20	Recommissioned in changed situation as Watchman.	4
				Ch. 34:1-22	Against false shepherds; wayward flock	4
				Ch. 34:23-31	True Shepherd promised.	4
				Ch. 35	Against Edom (representing "Adam" nations).	4
				Ch. 36	Israel's transformation — "for Mine Holy Name's sake"	4
				Ch. 37	Valley of dry bones prophecy; Two sticks joined.	4
				Ch. 38-39	Against Gog.	4
572	25			Ch. 40-48	Vision of Glory restored in Yahweh's "House"	5
570	27	1	1	Ch. 29:17-21	Against Egypt — as a reward to Babylon for Tyre	3(2)

* AV gives 12th year. Some mss show 11th, and logic agrees 6 months rather than 18 months for news to reach Ezekiel.

Part I — The “Glory” Portrayed — Its Nature, Mission & Ultimate Victory

Chapter 1 — The Vision of the Cherubim

It was one of the blessings Yahweh bestowed upon His servants that He did not ask them to undergo trials without first giving them evidence and assurance of the ultimate salvation that faithful service would bring.

In Ezekiel we have a classic example in the Vision of Glory he was granted, and which he has recorded for us in his first chapter. We can think also of Isaiah (eg. Ch. 2), and Daniel (Ch. 2:19-44). There is no record of any of the others, apart from Jeremiah, suffering hardship — theirs were straightforward messages of condemnation, warning, exhortation. Jeremiah was a special case, in very special circumstances; and he received his strength by other means (Ch. 1:5-10, 17-19; and the 52 times he claims “The word of the LORD came unto me”, or “The word that the LORD spake by Jeremiah”). We can think then of the apostles at Pentecost; Paul on the road to Damascus; and pre-eminently of Jesus Christ himself, who “for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame.”

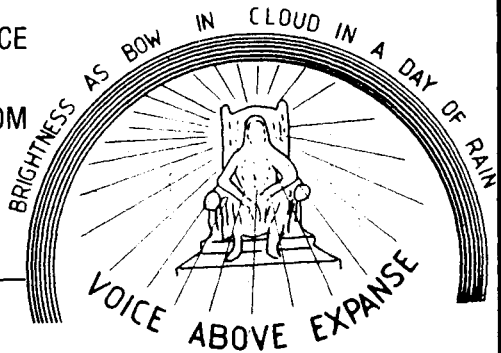
Our blessing is that we can read of, and “see” these visions also, and with even greater understanding and assurance than those to whom they were given.

So it is with Ezekiel’s vision of the Cherubic Glory. Here we have a most glorious vision of Christ and his saints (Yahweh Tzvaoth — He Who Shall Be Armies) marching forward over all the earth in warlike operation to subdue the earth; then, that work accomplished to provide the rest and blessings for all mankind in the transcendent vision of the Glory of Yahweh manifest in all the world.

Ezekiel Ch.1 THE VISION OF THE CHERUBIM

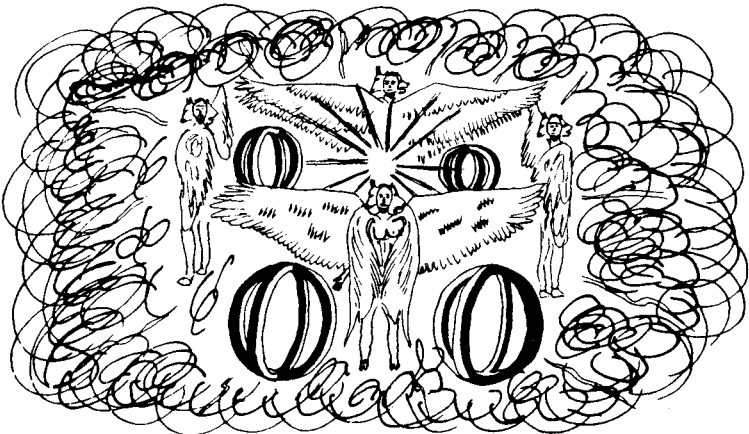
LIKENESS OF THE GLORY OF YAHWEH v.25-28

LIKENESS AS APPEARANCE
OF A MAN
BURNISHED COPPER FROM
LOINS UPWARDS
AS FIRE FROM LOINS
DOWNWARDS
LIKENESS OF A THRONE
AS SAPPHIRE STONE



THE TERRIBLE EXPANSE v. 22-25

WINGS STRAIGHT ONE TOWARDS ANOTHER
COVERING THEIR BODIES
STOOD AND LET DOWN WINGS



VERSES 1-3

“30th year” — Either of Ezekiel’s life, when he entered into the priesthood (although there is no certain evidence that this applied — the regulations in Numbers 4 applied to the Levitical orders of Kohath, Gershon, and Merari concerning their duties about the Tabernacle, and they may or may not have included the priestly line from Levi through Kohath and then Aaron); or some great landmark in Judah’s history — i.e. the great Passover of Josiah (2 Kings 21:21-23) in his 18th year BC 622. Ezekiel had been taken with Jehoiachin BC 597 (2 Chron. 36:9-10) and the 5th year of his captivity therefore was BC 592. This also would have been the 13th year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign.

“River of Chebar” — Probably a canal between the Tigris and the Euphrates, said to have been some 45 miles north of Babylon. Now Daniel in Babylon; Ezekiel at Chebar; Jeremiah in Jerusalem.

“Ezekiel” — *El doth strengthen* (see Ch. 3:3-7). Note also the 7 occasions when “the Hand of the LORD was upon me” (Ch. 1:3; 3:14; 3:22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1). And the 50 occasions when “the Word of the LORD came unto me, saying . . .”).

“Visions of God” — Better understood as “visions from God” (as also 8:3), although “visions of God” certainly applicable to some events.

VERSE 4

“Whirlwind” — The usual words are ‘supah’ — a sudden, violent hurricane, sweeping away all before it (eg Jer. 4:13); or ‘searah’ — violent agitation, as a whirlwind, rushing onward as a storm or tempest (eg. Jer. 23:19). But here it is *ruach searah* — “a spirit of a whirling wind”, or “a spirit-storm”.

“North” — Heb. *tsaphon*, associated with ‘Tsaphan’ the hidden or secret place. The north to the Hebrews spoke of the unknown. Primarily used of the compass-point, but here in the prophetic context, more of the judgment of Yahweh from the ‘secret place’ (see Isa. 41:25 in context; and note that Dan (Judgment) was stationed on the North of the Tabernacle (Num. 2:25) also see Psa. 75:6-7).

“Cloud” — Of *elohim*, then of saints (Dan. 7:13-14; Luke 21:27; Heb. 12:1; 1 Thess. 4:16; Rev. 1:7).

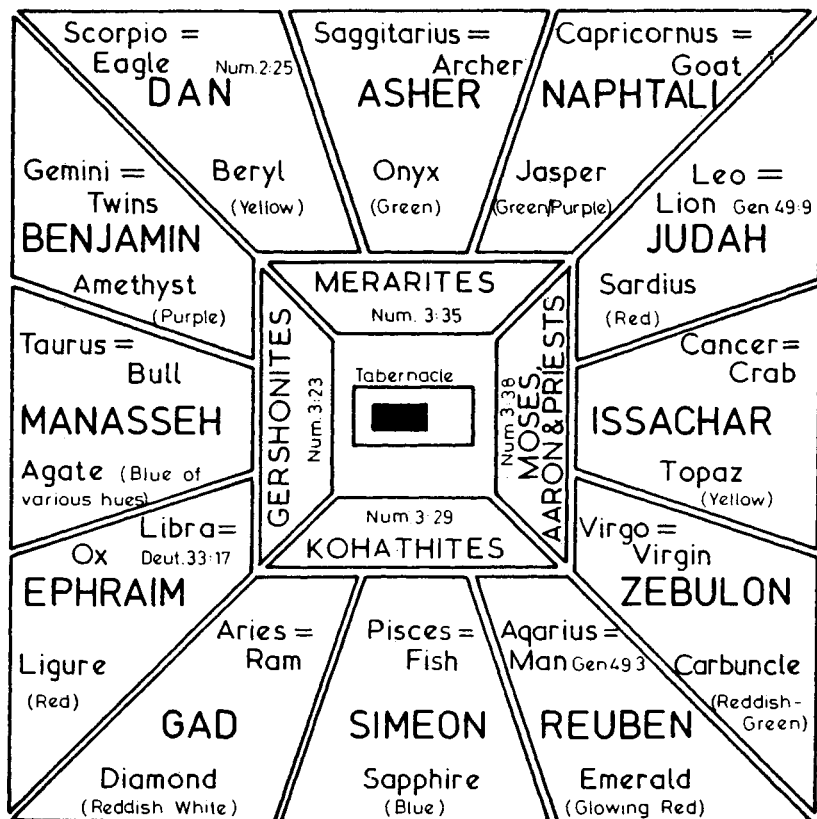
“Fire” — Generally of wrath in symbology (sometimes, though, of acceptance). In context, here, of wrath (Psa. 50:1-6; 2 Thess. 1:7-9).

“Brightness” — Heb. *nogah* — shining as of fire, sun, moon. See also Ch. 1:13,27-28; 10:4; Isa. 60:3; 62:1.

“Colour” — Heb. *Ayin* — an eye, fountain, outward appearance. See also Ch. 1:7,16,22,27 and elsewhere.

“Amber” — Heb. *chasmal* — a metal mixture of gold (faith) and silver (redemption), noted for its shining appearance. Septuagint renders “electron”, the Greek basis for English “electricity”. Refer to Job 23:10; 1 Pet. 1:7 as to gold; Prov. 25:4; Zech. 13:9; Mal. 3:3; Lev. 5:15; Num. 3:45-51 as to silver.

THE ENCAMPMENT OF ISRAEL



Identification of stones, and consequently their colourings, is quite uncertain, and therefore no claim of complete accuracy can be made. Similarly, no credence can be attached to the signs of the Zodiac, and these are shown for interest only, because of the tradition that the Tribes did take these signs as emblems (though variations occur in which sign was taken by each tribe). Certain it is that the ancients were aware of the Zodiac — see Job 38:31-32 (mgn); and note that Josiah found it necessary to “put down” those who observed these “signs” — see 2 Kings 23:5 (mgn). In the Spiritual and Prophetic senses, this Physical Encampment of the Israel of God portrays the Lord Jesus Christ and the Encampment of the Glorified Saints, through the fourfold presentation of Jesus the Son of God and man, and through the visions of Ezekiel and John.

VERSES 5-11

“**Likeness**” — Heb. *demuwth* resemblance; model; shape. Found in Chs. 1,8 as ‘likeness’ and in 23:15 as ‘after the manner of’.

“**Appearance**” — Heb. *mareh* a view (the act of seeing); an appearance (the thing seen); a mental vision; beauty.

“**Four living creatures**” — As the “whirlwind” drew nearer, Ezekiel was able to discern 4 “living creatures” emerge “out of” the cloud and fire. They had the appearance of a man, but each with 4 faces, 4 wings, “straight” feet that looked as the feet of a calf, and the hand of a man under the wings.

“**Man**” — Heb. *adam* here representing the developed “perfect man” of Eph. 4:12-16.

“**Living creatures**” — Heb. *chaiyah*, the same as in Gen. 1:28; 8:17 (“living thing”).

“**Four**” — Yet one whole vision (Ezek. 10:20-22). Our hope is an Israelitish one; the final 4-square encampment of the saints is the hope of Israel fulfilled. Compare v. 10 with Numbers 2 and Rev. 4 (esp. v. 7-8). The twelve tribes each had a standard — we are told one of the 12 constellations. The “Targum of Jonathan” lists them, and the Jewish historian Aben Ezra (died 1168 AD) confirms the 4 main ones

Judah — the lion
Reuben — the man

Ephraim — the ox
Dan — the eagle

Numbers 2 & 3 regulate the camping order:—

Judah and 2 others to the East
Reuben and 2 others to the South
Ephraim and 2 others to the West
Dan and 2 others to the North

The Sanctuary in the centre

On the two occasions Ezekiel saw the Cherubim in motion, he saw them in their camp order —

Judah to the East, and leading the march; Reuben to the South; Ephraim to the West; Dan to the North.

Numbers 10 sets out the marching order:—

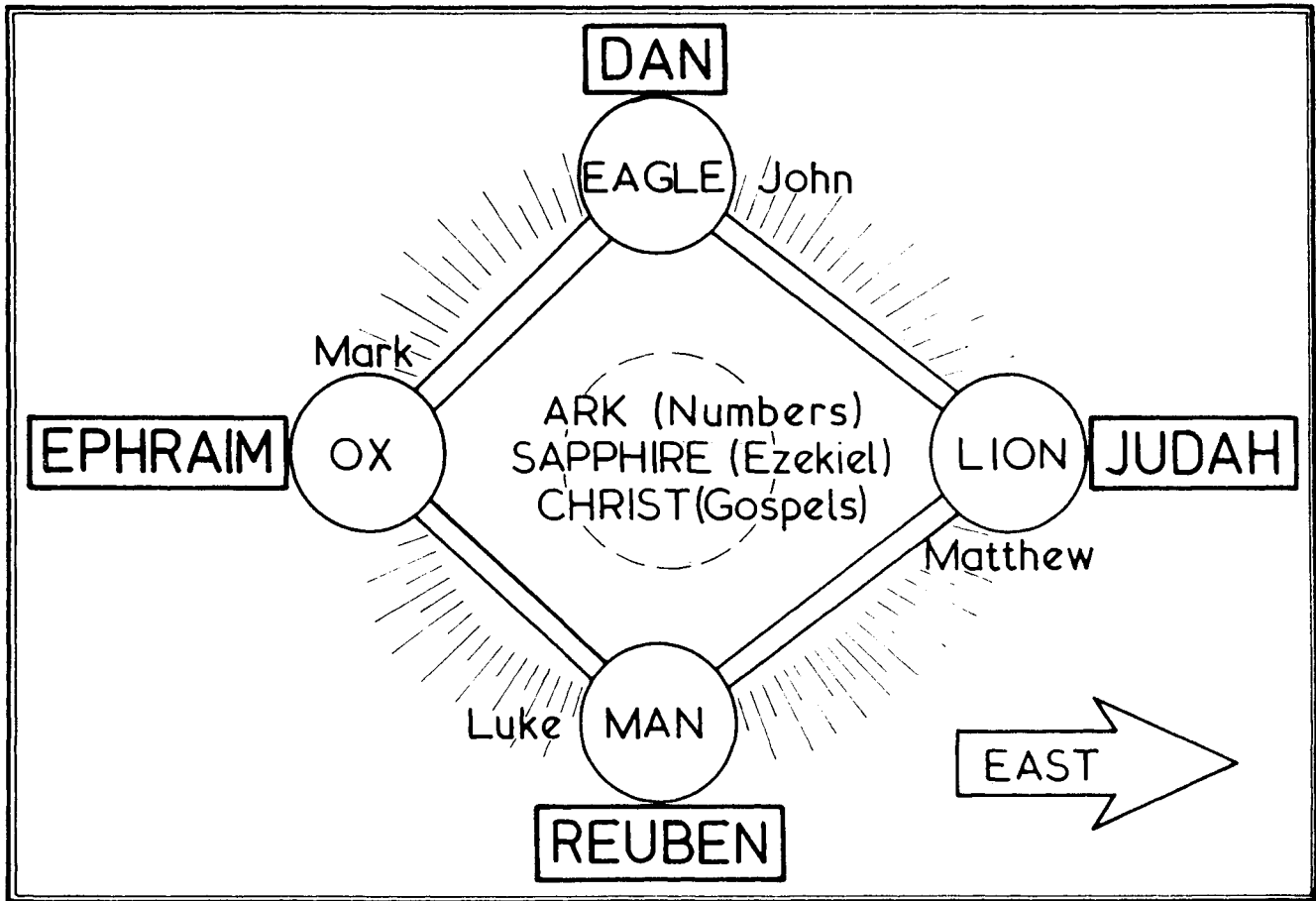
1. Judah, Issachar, Zebulun
2. The Tabernacle structure with Gershon and Merari.
3. Reuben, Simeon, Gad
4. The Sanctuary (i.e. the consecrated vessels) with Kohath
5. Ephraim, Manasseh, Benjamin
6. Dan, Asher, Naphtali.

It is widely accepted now that the 4 faces of the Cherubim have a reflection in the 4 Gospel records —

Matthew to represent the Lion (Judah).

Mark to represent the Ox (Ephraim).

Luke to represent the Man (Reuben).



John to represent the Eagle (Dan).

As such they have Christ as the central theme, and speak of the various aspects of his nature and work —

Matthew has the Royal genealogical line, as befits the one “born to be king” (see Zech. 9:9; Matt. 27:11).

Mark has no genealogy, as befits one who came as a servant (slave) of all (see Isaiah 42:1; Mark 10:45). Only in Ch. 7:28 and 9:24 is Jesus addressed as ‘kurios’ (Lord); elsewhere he is ‘didaskalos’ (teacher, master).

Luke speaks of Yahweh’s man (see Psa. 80:17; Zech. 6:12). Hence the genealogy begins with Adam.

John’s genealogy is the Divine — the Word made flesh (see Isaiah 40:9-11).

In Paul’s letter to the Philippians is a remarkable reflection of the 4 faces of the Cherubim in the Lord — see Ch. 2:5-11.

v. 5 “Let *this* mind be in *you*,” he exhorts, “as it was in Christ”.

What mind?

v. 6 Though he was in the “form” of God (cf Gen. 1:26) (i.e. the eagle face — the Spirit-Word made flesh) he did not aspire to be “as” God (cf. Gen. 3:5).

v. 7 But he accepted the position of a servant (doulos — servant; slave), and ‘kenoo’ emptied himself of all position and pride (ie the ox face).

vv. 7-8 In the likeness of men (i.e. the man face) he humbled himself before, and was obedient to, his God, even unto death.

vv. 9-11 Therefore, God has exalted him to a kingly state (ie. the lion face); and to him “every knee shall bow”, and all shall worship him, to the Glory of his Father.

Would we follow him in that path to glory? Then let us do so, “with fear and trembling”, allowing God to work in us, of His good pleasure (vv. 12-13).

“**Straight feet**” — Heb. *yashar* — upright (also v. 23).

“**Calf’s foot**” — Heb. *egel* — calf, heifer; i.e. threshing feet — see Psa. 18:31-50; Micah. 4:13; Malachi 4:1-3.

“**Burnished brass**” — Purified flesh — see Jer. 6:28-30 cf. Ezek. 22:18. The oxen of Deut. 25:4 were often shod with brass or iron to assist in the treading (threshing) of the crop.

“**Hands**” — Heb. *yad* (singular) — power to perform.

“**Wings**” — 4 to each living creature.

In Scripture, wings are used to signify an overshadowing power (Psa. 17:7-9; 36:7; Isa. 8:7-8). In Ezekiel they represent the multitudinous saints, joined to the one Body, but over-spreading the earth (see v. 23-24). The positions of 2 out-stretched, and 2 downturned, seem to indicate movement and defence. Compare the Seraphim (Isa. 6) and Living Creatures (“beasts”) (Rev. 4) where there are 6 wings. The Seraphim (derivation “saraph” — to burn, consume) have 2 cov-

ering the face, surely an indication of Yahweh's face not yet revealed in mercy (Num. 6:24-27; Jer. 18:17). The Living Creatures' wings are not described.

The Hebrew *anaph* — “a wing, as covering or protecting” (Young) is the same word as is translated “skirts” in Ch. 5:3.

“**Straight forward**” — Heb. *el eber paneh* — Literally “on the side of their face”, i.e. “in the direction their face pointed”. See also v. 12; 10:22.

VERSE 12-14

The operations of the Cherubim described. Driven, ridden, inhabited by the Spirit (the import of the ‘Cherubim’) they are pictured as moving with lightning rapidity throughout the earth, accomplishing the desires of the One Who motivates them. Note Septuag. “in the midst of the living creatures was the appearance” of burning coals of fire — the Spirit motivation.

“**Burning**” — Heb. *ba'ar* — consuming. Speaking of Divine warfare by the agency of the glorified saints. See Psa. 18:6-14; Rev. 8:5.

“**Lamps**” — Heb. “*lappid*” (singular) — torch or flame. Compare Gen. 15:17 where the “lamp of fire” (mgn.) represented the Divine Presence in the Covenant made with Abraham.

“**Lightning**” — Heb. *baraq*. Here a symbol of the swift execution of Divine judgment, as in 2 Sam. 22:15; Psa. 18:14; 144:6; Zech. 9:14 etc.

“**Flash of lightning**” — Heb. *bazak*. This is the only occurrence of this word, and here appears to indicate speed.

VERSE 15-21

A further remarkable fact is noticed — a wheel beside each cherub.

“**Wheel**” — Heb. *ophan* “to revolve”, is found in all places up to and including Ch. 11:22; (except Ch. 10:2; 10:6 “between the wheels”; Ch. 10:13 “o wheel” where ‘galgal’ — rolling thing). Compare 1 Kings 7:27-37, giving the impression of a chariot — the “chariot of the cherubim” (1 Chron. 28:18). Two wheels of equal size joined at right angles gives the facility for rapid motion in any direction, straight forward, with no turning (v. 12).

See further note on Ch. 10:2.

“**Beryl**” — Heb. *tarshish*, a sea-green stone, derived from *rahshash* — to break, destroy. On the Aaronic breastplate (Exod. 39:9-14) almost certainly represented Dan (Judgment Gen. 30:6). Identified as the topaz.

“**Rings**” — Heb. *gab* (rims) cf. 1 Kings 7:32-33 (*naves*).

“**Dreadful**” — Heb. *yirah* — to be feared; revered. See verse 22.

“**Eyes**” — The light of the body (Matt. 6:22); the symbol of intelligence (Psa. 19:8; Eph. 1:17-18; cf. Matt. 13:15-17); also of intelligences or personages (those engraven on the Yahweh-stone of Zech. 3:8-9; 4:9-10; cf. Isa. 28:16; Rev. 4:8). Heb. *ayin*, the sixteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet — see Psa. 119, heading v. 121, and note verse 123.

In verses 19-21 we have a picture of complete unity of Spirit, and of spirit — the “living creatures” and the “wheels” as one; controlled by the Divine inhabiting Spirit, and of one mind between themselves (the AV mgn. “or, of life,” is confusing and inadequate. Certainly “chay” or “chayah” are translated “life” many times — in Ezekiel for example, in 7:13 “neither shall any strengthen himself in the iniquity of his life”, and in ch. 33:15 “walk in the statutes of life.” But here we are not being told that the wheels have life, but rather that they are motivated into action by the same spirit — *ruach* — that motivated the ‘living creatures’).

VERSE 22

“**Firmament**” — Heb. *raqia* — expanse, as in Gen. 1, Psa. 19:1; 150:1; Dan. 12:3 — “They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament.” The political heavens, representing the power that will be “upon the heads” of the “living creatures.”

“**Terrible**” — Heb. *yare* (from which comes *yirah* of verse 18) — to be feared, revered, frightening.

“**Crystal**” — Heb. *qerach*, also rendered “frost”, “ice”. From the use of the Greek equivalent in Rev. 4:6; 21:11; 22:1 evidently symbolising righteousness.

VERSES 23-24

See earlier notes, but note also

“**Waters**” — Many people (Isa. 8:7-8; Rev. 1:15; 17:15).

“**Almighty**” — Heb. *shaddai* powerful ones. A remarkable title of Yahweh. In itself it means “to be burly, powerful, impregnable” (Strong) and is associated with “shadad”, with the undoubted meaning of “waster”, “destroyer”. But it is also closely associated with “shad,” meaning “breast”, “bosom”, with the implication of “nourisher”. Thus we read of the Almighty dealing bitterly with and afflicting Naomi (Ruth 1:20,21), and scattering kings (Psalm 68:14); but sheltering the faithful (Psalm 91:1), and blessing Joseph (Gen. 49:24-25). The context controls the import — here in warlike operation, as is evident from the next word.

“**Host**” — Heb. *macheneh* — to lay siege, encamp, an army. Remarkably, this word has mainly to do with an army which has come to rest temporarily — e.g. Exod. 16:13 “the dew lay round about the host” i.e. the encampment of Israel. In view of the next statement, it is appropriate here.

“**They let down their wings**” — No longer on the move; their destructive work completed. The nations subdued, the Kingdom established. The healing work of the Almighty about to commence, and the “Glorv” made manifest (vv. 25-28).

VERSES 25-28

But if what Ezekiel had so far seen was glorious, what he next witnessed was so fearfully majestic as to cause him to fall upon his face, as one dead (v. 28). He had seen the host of Yahweh as a manifestation of His Spirit-invested "Glory"; now he saw "above the firmament" of the political heaven now brought to a calm condition, the Glory of Yahweh's Throne, established in His Kingdom. He describes it in words unmistakably reminiscent of the sight of "the Glory of the LORD" seen by Moses and his companions on Sinai (see Exod. 24:9-10, 15-18).

It is to be noted that in verse 25, virtually all modern versions — RV, RSV, Young, NASB, Ampl. Bible, NEB etc. read, "And there was a voice from *above* the firmament." The voice came from the throne, not from the firmament. See v. 26.

"A throne" — The sapphire is a sky-blue stone. Blue is a symbol of healing (Prov. 20:30 AV), but perhaps more appropriately, it also represented Yahweh and His Words to the Jew who wore a ribband of blue in the borders of his garments (Num. 15:38-41). Red is the colour of flesh; blue and red mixed produce purple, the colour of royalty. The Hebrew *cappiy* is thought to refer to the Lapis Lazuli, ranging "from ultra-marine to dark violet blue". See also Exod. 24:10; Ezek. 10:1; 28:13. The Throne was Yahweh's, the one who sat upon it had "the appearance of a man" ('Adam') — but a man made Royalty indeed.

"A man" — Compare Dan. 10:5-6; Rev. 1:12-16.

"The bow" — Refer v. 4 (cloud). The consummation of the 'Glory'; the symbol of Divine mercy (Gen. 9:9-17) — the "mown" population now blessed by the merciful and righteous ministrations of Christ and his glorious brethren. (Deut. 32:4; Psa. 72; Isa. 55:6-13).

The "Glory" is called "The glory of the LORD" in ch. 1:28; 3:12,23; 10:4,18; 11:23; 43:4,5; 44:4 (9 times). It is called "The glory of the God of Israel" in ch. 8:4; 9:3; 10:19; 11:22; 43:2 (5 times). We have emphasised here, as in so many other places, the mercy of Yahweh, Who, despite Israel's perfidy, and its impending punishments, was still prepared to acknowledge Himself as "the Elohim of Israel." His "Glory" would leave their Temple which they had desecrated, but it will return and once again the "Glory of the God of Israel" will come, and the "Glory of the LORD" will fill the "house" — "the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever" (Ezek. 43:1-7).

Ezekiel Ch. 1 lays the emphasis on Yahweh as the all-pervading, over-riding, directing, Spirit of the Cherubim (the Sapphire).

Revelation Ch. 4, so closely associated with Ezekiel 1, emphasises Christ as the manifestation of the Yahweh-Spirit (Jasper and Sardine).

CHERUBIM

It is not until we reach Ch. 10 that Ezekiel tells us that these “living creatures” were “Cherubim” (note — not “*the* cherubim” as in the AV — just “cherubim”, as e.g. in RSV, NASB, Ampl. Bible, NEB, Young’s Lit., RV, Jerus. Bible, Douay, & Septuag.). This is important, as there are several different manifestations of “cherubim” in the Bible. As to the derivation and meaning of the word “cherub”, most commentators are at a loss; yet the Scriptural usage of the term is plain enough.

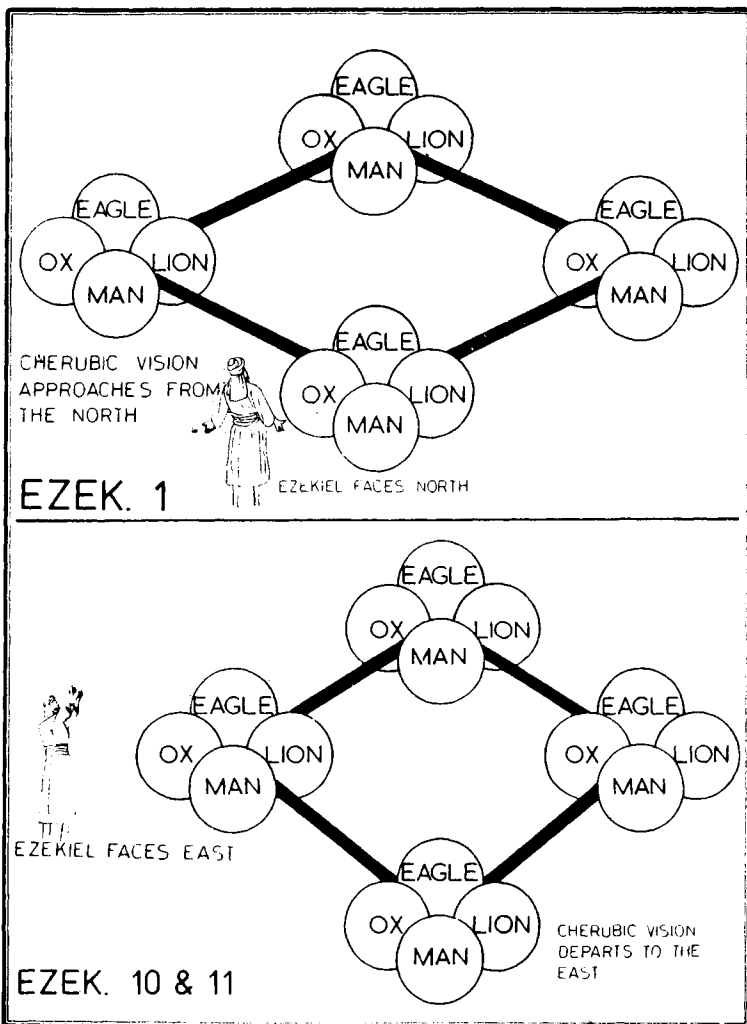
C.C. Walker in “Theophany” p. 83, 1929 edition — quotes Gesenius as giving the derivation of the word as “from RKB, by transposition of the letters, as rekeb, a chariot,” and comments “This idea harmonises well with the allusions to the cherubim as the Divine steeds, vehicles, and ‘chariots’, also with the allusions to the wheels, wings, eyes, clouds, spirit, lightning etc. that are found throughout the Bible.”

John Thomas in *Phanerosis* — pg. 97 Maran-atha Press edition; pg. 88 Logos Edition — says: “We believe that the word is derived from the root ‘rachav’, ‘to ride’ whether on an animal or in a vehicle. By transposing the first two letters and heemantively inserting *wav* before the last, we have *cherub* or that which is ridden-in the plural *cherubim*. Then he quotes Psalm 18:10 ‘and he rode upon a cherub and did fly’, and Psalm 104:3 ‘the clouds are styled Yahweh’s *r’chuv* (*rekeb* — Young) chariot, which is ‘*ch’rub*’, with the first two letters transposed.” (he means that RKB becomes KRB which is in line with Gesenius above).

As there were no vowels in the Hebrew text, these must be supplied — thus RKB becomes *rekeb* — chariot in English — (translated 114 times as such) or *rekub* (occurring once, and also translated ‘chariot’); while the transposed form KRB becomes *kerub* (or that which is ridden — in or on — occurring 28 times in the singular, and 64 times in the plural *kerubim*).

Thus the angels are cherubim (Spirit-ridden beings): so was Jesus, even in his mortality; so must we be, even now — in the sense of the Spirit-Word indwelling and motivating our thoughts and actions.

CHERUBIM ENCAMPMENT



In Ch. 1:4,10, with Ezekiel facing north, he sees the Cherubic trees as — Man facing South, Lion to the East, Eagle to the North, Ox to the West. This agrees with the Encampment order of Numbers 2 & 3.

In Ch. 10 & 11, with Ezekiel standing at "the east gate of Yahweh's house, which looketh eastward" (11:1), he sees the cherubim departing eastward (11:23) ahead of him. The face he now looks at is that of the ox (Cherub), still to the West, with the man to the south, the eagle to the north, & the lion to the east (10:14). The positions have not changed.

THE CHERUBIM IN SCRIPTURE

Ref.	No.	Form	Faces	Wings	Situation
Gen. 3:24	More than 1	"Living" — as a flaming sword (or sword of flame)			Eastern entrance to Garden of Eden
Exod. 37	2	Gold of 1 piece	not disclosed	2 each which touched	Most Holy — above & covered by Shekinah Glory which inhabited Yahweh's Throne.
1 Kgs. 6-8	2	Olive wood, overlaid with gold	not disclosed	2 each, touching in centre, & touching outer wall each side	Most Holy — above the Ark
Ezek. 1	4 — joined as 1 unit	"Living" — as a creature	4 each — man/lion/ox/eagle	4 each — 2 joined to next cherub, on each side; 2 covering body.	Beneath the Sapphire Throne — the whole in motion; then finally at rest
Ezek. 42	1 to each entrance over 800 in all		2 each — man/lion, back to back; each facing a pillar		On entrances to the Inner Sanctuary
Rev. 4	4	"Living" — as a creature	1 each — lion/calf/man/eagle	6 full of eyes	In the midst of, & round about the Rainbow Throne, & surrounding the Lamb.
Isa. 6		"Living" (Seraphim)		6 — 2 covered face 2 covered feet 2 to fly	Around the Divine Throne — above, & incorporating Temple.

Of necessity, this chart is incomplete. It shows only those features which are to some extent common in Ezekiel 1. For example, many other features are listed which find no counterpart in any other Scriptural reference to Cherubim.

Of the Cherubim of Genesis we are told nothing. Undoubtedly they were angels, caused to "*shaken*" (tabernacle) at the entrance to the Garden. They were as a '*lahat chereb*' (a flaming or flashing destroying weapon).

The Mosaic Cherubic figures represented the immortalised saints in the Most Holy, formed of one piece with the gold of the Mercy Seat (Christ), inhabited by the Divine Spirit (the Shekinah — that which dwells; the Glory). The cherubic figures interwoven in the 10 curtains (Exod. 36:8-13) and the veil (Exod. 36:35) spoke of this age (the fine-twined linen of righteousness; of blue, and purple and scarlet — colours of flesh mixed with Godliness).

Ezekiel Ch. 1 we have covered in more detail, as indicative of the Yahweh Chariot — Christ and his saints — going forth to subdue, then

to revitalise the earth and its populace. In Ch. 42 the cherubic figures are again associated with the Inner Sanctuary, on each side of the entrances, so that all who pass through will have a lion-face on one side, and a man-face on the other. The ox-face, and the eagle-face have disappeared. Why? The suggestion in "Theophany" (C.C. Walker) seems the best — "the ox would stand for the sacrificial aspect ('the blood of bulls and goats'). And the eagle for the carnivorous aspect ('wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together'). These phases of the character of Christ are past when the temple of the age to come is erected, and only the 'man' (image of God) and 'lion' (reigning majesty of God) phases remain". Henry Sulley adds to this "The lion face on the one side speaks of 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah' and 'the face of a young man' points to none other than to Him who is worthy to bear the title".

In the Apocalypse we find the picture of the Rainbowed Throne surrounded by the political (4 living creatures) and the priestly (24 elders) representations of the saints in glory in the Kingdom age. They have the same faces as the Cherubim of Ezekiel 1 to symbolise the Israelitish nature of the Hope by which their salvation has come about. They each have 6 wings and are full of eyes — symbolical, probably, of the overshadowing power of the saints — flesh now become individuals in a composite body of immortal rulers.

The chart also includes the Seraphim of Isaiah, because of their close association with the Cherubim. But yet they are different. The word comes from 'saraph' — to burn or consume, and they have no picture of rest and peace associated with them, ('saraph' is rendered 92 times as 'burn'; 3 times as 'fiery'; 3 times as 'fiery serpents,' and twice as 'seraphim,' plus 'kindle' etc.) It chiefly relates to the whole burnt offering e.g. Lev. 4:12,21. But they *do* have a connection with the cauterising, purifying, healing, work of Christ (see Num. 21:8 where 'fiery serpents' is 'saraph'; and John 3:14; 12:32). The feature of the seraphim is that they have 6 wings — with 2 the face is covered (Yahweh's displeasure — Num. 6:25; Jer. 18:17); with 2 the feet are covered (no message of peace — Isa. 52:7); with 2 they flew (to accomplish their designated tasks — cf. Ps. 80:1-17; Dan. 10:9-14). They relate therefore, to the cleansing of the world, that the Glory of Yahweh may be the fulness of the whole earth (Isa. 6:3 mg.).

Part II — The Glory Departs — Reasons For And Description of the Departure

Chapters 2 to 11

Having been encouraged by the glorious vision, Ezekiel is now brought to understand more completely the desperate realities of the present. He suffers a typical death and resurrection and is strengthened to receive the hard message to come — before the glory must be more and greater suffering, and he himself must suffer also in the service of his God. It is a message for the saints of all ages (Rom. 8:16-19; 2 Tim. 2:11-12; 3:12).

Chapter 2 — Ezekiel's Call As a Prophet & Watchman

VERSES 1-2

With Ch. 1:28, a typical death and resurrection; experienced also by others (e.g. Dan. 10:7-19 where 3 resurrection steps are portrayed (v. 10,11,18-19).

“Son of man” — Heb. *ben adam*. Used 92 times in Ezekiel as a type of Christ (Psa. 8:4-6;80:17).

“spirit entered” — Ezekiel now constituted a “cherub” — a Spirit-inhabited and controlled “chariot”.

VERSES 3-7

Ezekiel's *charge* given — apostolised (“I do send thee”).

“Lord GOD” — Adonai Yahweh, found about 220 times in Ezekiel (— He who shall be Rulers).

VERSE 8-10

Appeal to Ezekiel. Words of Yahweh offered and “eaten”. Sweet to taste; but producing bitterness in his being, for the evils of Israel and nations (3:14 “hot anger” — mgn; cf. Jer. 1:7-10; Rev. 10:8-11).

Chapter 3 — The Eaten Roll — The Bitter Message

VERSES 1-3

An unpleasant duty laid upon him, but Yahweh's Word digested and becoming part of his being would drive him irresistably on.

VERSE 4-11

Ezekiel's *prophetical mission* outlined — "To the house of Israel". They would not hear and would resist him, but "I have made thee strong" (Ezekiel).

"**Adamant — flint**" — Heb. *shamiyr, tsor*. The phrase is found again in Zech. 7:12. "A sharp point, a diamond, so called from its perforating and cutting other substances" (Wilson's O.T. Word Studies). The hearts of Ezekiel's people were as a rock (*tsor*), but Ezekiel's words would be such as to scratch even them, so cutting would they be.

VERSES 12-14

Completely under the Spirit-influence (now a 'Cherub' himself), Ezekiel is "taken up". The Cherubim manifest urgent, agitated movement, and the "Glory" is proclaimed (RSV to be preferred:— "Then the Spirit lifted me up and as the Glory arose from its place, I heard behind me the sound of a great earthquake; it was the sound of the wings of the living creatures as they touched one another, and the sound of the wheels besides them, that sounded like a great earthquake").

The change from the AV 'Blessed' to 'as' or 'when' "comes from the change in a single consonant — from 'baruk' to 'barum'" (Griesbach).

VERSE 15

"**Tel-Abib**" — Thought to be the main settlement of captives (Israel and Judah) in the area. Tel Abib means "The mound of green growth" or "Hill of corn ears". At this time Daniel was in Babylon itself. For 7 days Ezekiel 'astonished' — speechless in his anger and grief (cf. Job 2:12-13; Psalm 137:1).

VERSES 16-21

Ezekiel's *watchman mission* outlined — to warn, exhort, condemn, admonish. At peril of his own life if he failed. Re-affirmed after the fall of Jerusalem (Ch. 33, which see for further elaboration).

"**Watchman**" — Heb. *tsaphah* — One who peers into the distance (Heb. 11:10,39-40; 12:2; Prov. 29:18).

VERSES 22-27

Ezekiel to remain dumb, except when moved to speech by Spirit-influence. Lasted about 6½ years (see 24:26-27; 33:21-22).

VERSES 22,23

“**Plain**” — Heb. *biqah* — a wide level valley between mountains. Also 8:4.

VERSE 25

“**They**” — Yahweh’s work — RSV “behold cords will be placed upon you”.

Chapter 4 — The Coming Siege of Jerusalem Portrayed

Chapters 4-11 contain 2 visions concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the reasons therefor:

The First Vision is in Chapters 4 to 7:

Ch. 4 — The siege and its lasting effects portrayed.

Ch. 5 — The immediate aftermath of the siege.

Ch. 6 — The reason — idolatry. A remnant preserved.

Ch. 7 — The end is come!

The Second Vision is in Chapters 8 to 11:

Ch. 8 — The four great abominations

Ch. 9 — Slaughter of the guilty; marking of the faithful; the Glory prepares to depart.

Chs. 10 & 11 — The Glory departs.

Ezekiel made dumb; becomes “a man of sign”. Compare Jer. 21:3-10.

The Mimic Siege: The Sign of the Bands — vv. 1-8

VERSE 1

“**Tile**” — A brick (RSV, Moff). An inscription clay — brick, said to be about 14” x 12”. Jerusalem illustrated by drawing or by shaping.

VERSE 2

The siege portrayed.

VERSE 3

“**Iron pan**” — Mgn. “plate”.

VERSES 4-8

“**The 390 or 40 days lying on one side**” — A difficult passage. Dr. Thomas (*Eureka* Vol. 1, p. 258) dates backward from the 11th year of Jehoiachin’s captivity — i.e. the 11th year of Zedekiah’s reign, when Jerusalem fell. This year he nominates as BC 589 (against BC 587 on the chart herein).

Go back 390 years and we have BC 977 (chart) as the 4th of Rehoboam, when Israel revolted “against the house of David”. A further 40 years takes us back to the 4th of Solomon (BC 1017) when the foundation of the Temple was laid (1 Kings 6:1). So we have 430 yrs. from the erection of the Temple to its destruction.

There are faults with this, notably a mis-reading of 2 Chron. 11:17 which does not indicate the revolt as being in the 4th of Rehoboam — it was earlier. But the general principle is probably correct.

A further suggestion is that the actions of Ezekiel were typically prophetic, as well as historical. So Dr. Thomas adds 430 yrs to B.C. 589 and obtains BC 169 (an arithmetical error) which he nominates as the year in which Mattathias (father of the Maccabees) declared independence (the generally accepted date is BC 167). Again, while we recognise the error in detail, the proposition may be correct in principle. For 430 yrs. from the terrible siege of Jerusalem he had thus portrayed, the nation would eat its “defiled bread” (v. 13) amongst the Gentiles.

(In ‘Exposition of Daniel’ Section 17, Dr. Thomas writes along the same lines. The Septuagint version and the Jerusalem Bible — which mostly follows the Septuagint — read 190 years instead of 390 years, but there seems to be no reason to accept this).

VERSE 7

“**Arm uncovered**” — As he typed not only the besieged, but the besiegers also, his arm was to be ready always for untrammelled action.

VERSE 8

“**The city falls.**”

VERSES 9-17

Famine resultant from the siege — not only during (v. 9), but afterward also (v. 13). Compare 1 Kings 25:3; Lam. 2:11-22; 4:1-10. It does not seem possible to ascertain what ‘20 shekels a day’, or ‘a sixth part of an hin’ represented, apart from the impression that it was a bare subsistence diet, which certainly fitted the famine conditions Ezekiel was portraying. Perhaps a reasonable explanation is 400 grains of wheat etc. (v. 9), and about 1 pint of water per day (there were 20 grains to a shekel — Exod. 30:13; Exod. 45:12; and a hin is said to have been about 1 gallon or 4½ litres).

Chapter 5 — Judgment of Jerusalem Following The Siege — Punishment for Rebellion

VERSES 1-2

cf. v. 12.

“**Burn with fire**” — i. e. on the tile which had represented Jerusalem — pestilence and famine, in the siege.

“**Smite with a knife**” — Death by war, in and around Jerusalem.

“**Scatter . . . wind . . . sword**” — Captivity, persecution, death, in foreign lands. See also Jer. 15:2.

VERSES 3-4

Of the last third, a few hairs were to be taken and bound in “the skirts of your robe” (RSV). Of these again he was to take a few hairs and throw them in the fire. As hair in a fire causes it to flair, so the judgments of Yahweh would spread out “into all the house of Israel”. So it transpired that those who treacherously murdered Gedaliah and fled from the safety of Jerusalem into Egypt did not escape the “fury” of Yahweh (Jer. 41:1-3; 42:18). But still a few — a very few — remained in safety in Yahweh’s “skirts” (Heb. *kanaph* — Ezek. 16:8; Ruth 3:9; “wings” in Ezek. 1:3-9; Malachi 4:2).

VERSES 5-11

Reasons for such punishments given again.

VERSES 13-17

Then shall they know — warnings and exhortations they had ignored; they must learn that Yahweh’s promises — for good or for ill — will be fulfilled.

Chapters 6-7 — Jerusalem & The Land Doomed — A Remnant To Escape

Ch. 5 — Punishment for Rebellion

Ch. 6 — Punishment For Idolatry

Ch. 7 — The Impending Ruin

There appears to be a close correspondence between Chapters 6 & 7—

Ch. 6:1-7: Against the mountains, where pagan worship is rife — desolation and death.

Ch. 7:1-15: The End is near upon all the land — famine and death upon its inhabitants.

Ch. 6:8-10: A Remnant to survive, but as captives.

Ch. 7:16-20: Those who escape to be in weakness and despair.

Ch. 6:11-14: The whole land desolate as a consequence.

Ch. 7:21-27: What is left others shall possess. All shall mourn — king, princes, priests, people.

Each section in Ch. 6 closes with, and the final thought of Ch. 7 is — “and they shall know that I am Yahweh!”

CHAPTER 6:14

RSV reads: “I will stretch out My Hand upon them, and make the land desolate and waste, throughout all their habitations, from the wilderness (south desert — Moff.) to Riblah”. Riblah thought to have been about 45 miles north of Damascus (2 Kings 23:33; 25:6).

CHAPTER 7:13

“**Vision**” — Heb. *chazown* — mental sight, dream, revelation, oracle. Ch. 7:13,26; 12:22,23,24,27; 13:16. (In 8:4; 11:24; 43:3 the word is *mareh* — a view, the act of seeing. This is the word used in Ezekiel for “appearance”. In 1:1; 8:3; 40:2; 43:3 the feminine form of this word *marah* is used. In 13:7 the word is *machazah* — a vision; found only here and in Gen. 15:1 of Abraham, and Num. 24:4,16 of Balaam).

VERSE 23

“**Make a chain**” — The Hebrew is said to be “uncertain”. The Amplified Bible has “make the chain (of imprisonment)”; the RSV omits the words from the text; the NEB has “clench your fists”. Whatever Ezekiel was told to do, it was a gesture of threatened punishment for the “bloody crimes” committed.

Chapter 8 — The Four Great Abominations

(Compare the four great punishments of Ch. 14).

A new series leading to the removal of the “Glory”.

VERSE 1

13 months later than Chapters 1 to 7.

“**Elders of Judah**” — Note 14:1, the elders of *Israel* also present at Chebar.

Ezekiel dumb before them.

VERSE 2

“**Fire**” — RSV and others give “man” (ish) not “fire” (esh), which however is used in the second occurrence of the word in the AV of this verse.

Thus — “the appearance of a man” — as the appearance of fire.

“**Brightness**” — A different word from Ch. 1:4. Here *zohar* — brilliance (found only here and in Dan. 12:3). In Ch. 28:7, 17 a third word is rendered ‘brightness’. It is *yiphah* — splendour, beauty; and is found only here.

“**Amber**” — Heb. *chasmal* as in Ch. 1:4,27. NEB “brass”, RSV “gleaming bronze”.

VERSE 3

“Hand . . . Spirit” — In vision Ezekiel is taken back to the Jerusalem of his youth to witness the abominations which were to bring a righteous punishment.

“Inner gate” — See v. 4.

“Image of jealousy” — See Deut. 4:16-23; 32:16-21. The exact nature is not specified, but it is spoken of again in Jer. 7:29-31.

VERSE 4

Here begins a series of movements of the Cherubic Vision and Glory of Yahweh, culminating in Ch. 11:23 with the departure of both from the City via the Mount of Olives. In some respects it is not easy to follow, and the following is suggested:

1. Ch. 8:3-4 Ezekiel is transported in vision to “the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north”. As built by Solomon, it appears that there were two gates to the north — the outer, which led into the Greater (or Outer) Court, and the inner, which led into the Court of the “House of the LORD” (otherwise called the “Altar” Gate), in which the Temple proper, the brazen Altar, the lavers, and the molten sea were found (2 Chron. 3 & 4). However, Jotham “built the higher gate of the house of the LORD” (2 Kings 15:32-35), and it is not known now what this was — an opening in the old wall, or another wall outside that of Solomon’s day? We do know it existed in Ezekiel’s day, and it was a gate to which the people had access — see Jer. 36:10 (“the new gate”) and Ezek. 9:2 (“the higher gate, which lieth toward the north”). So, “at the door of the inner gate” Ezekiel sees “the glory of the God of Israel, according to the vision that I saw in the plain” (Ch. 1 — thus incorporating the Cherubim and the Throne of Glory above).

2. In order that he might “see” the abominations being committed, Ezekiel is moved from place to place as recorded in Ch. 8:7,14,16. In the last verse he is found in “the inner court of the LORD’S house,” from where he sees the fourth “abomination”, and the subsequent movements of the Cherubim and the Throne of Glory.

3. Ch. 9:3. This is difficult. It is here suggested that the Shekinah “Glory” in the Most Holy Place (Exod. 25:22; 40:24-25; Psa. 80:1; 99:1; Isaiah 37:16) becomes incorporated with the Throne of Glory of Ezekiel’s vision, and as one this “Glory” is represented as leaving the Most Holy and the Cherubim, and being stationed at “the threshold of the house” — i.e. at the front (east) porch between the pillars Boaz (“in it is strength”) and Joachim (“He shall establish”). The Cherubim remain at the inner gate.

Note: The word “Shekinah” does not appear in Scripture. It means “that which dwells”, and comes from “shaken” (— to tabernacle; to dwell — see Gen. 3:24 where “placed” is “shaken”, and Exod. 25:8 where Yahweh promised to “dwell” — shaken — in the Tabernacle). It was used first in Jewish Targums (commentaries) of the Glory which “dwelt” in the Most Holy.

4. Ch. 10:3 Then the Cherubim move to a position “on the right (south) side of the house”.

5. Ch. 10:4 Delete the italicised words “and stood”. To be understood as indicated in Young’s Literal Translation — “And become high doth the honour of Jehovah above the Cherub, over the threshold of the house”. Thus, from a position “at” the threshold (Ch. 9:3), the Throne of Glory now rises to a height superior to that of the Cherubim — still at the south side of the House.

6. Ch. 10:18 Now the Throne of Glory moves to its original position above the Cherubim at the south side.

7. Ch. 10:19 The Cherubim, with the Throne of Glory above “lift up their wings and mount up from the earth”.

8. Ch. 11:1 Ezekiel is moved to “the east gate of the LORD’S house”.

9. Ch. 11:22-23 Ezekiel observes the Cherubim, the wheels, and the “glory of the God of Israel” leave the city and stand upon the Mount of Olives. Yahweh’s presence has departed!

In Ch. 43 the “Glory” returns by way of the Mount of Olives and the East Gate.

The Lord Jesus Christ departed from the Mount of Olives. He will return to his city in the same way (Acts 1:1-12; Zech. 14:4).

VERSES 5-6 First Abomination

“**That . . . sanctuary**” — RSV and others “driving Me from My sanctuary”.

VERSES 7-12 — Second Abomination

VERSE 8

“**Door of the court**” — The exact position is uncertain, but apparently leading into the lower chambers, where the ‘elders’ had quarters.

VERSE 10

The gods (principally) of Egypt, to whom they looked for help against Babylon.

VERSE 11

“**70 men**” — If we can take Exod. 24:1 cf. Num. 11:16 as still being operative, it appears that the supreme council of “elders” numbered 70 (later, the Sanhedrin).

“**Jaazaniah**” — *Yahweh hears*. Evidently a chief of the 70 and he the son of that Shaphan of Josiah’s day (2 Kings 22)!

VERSE 12

“**Chambers . . . imagery**” — NEB, Moff. “at the shrine of his own carved image” — in their own “chambers”! Thus far had they sunken!

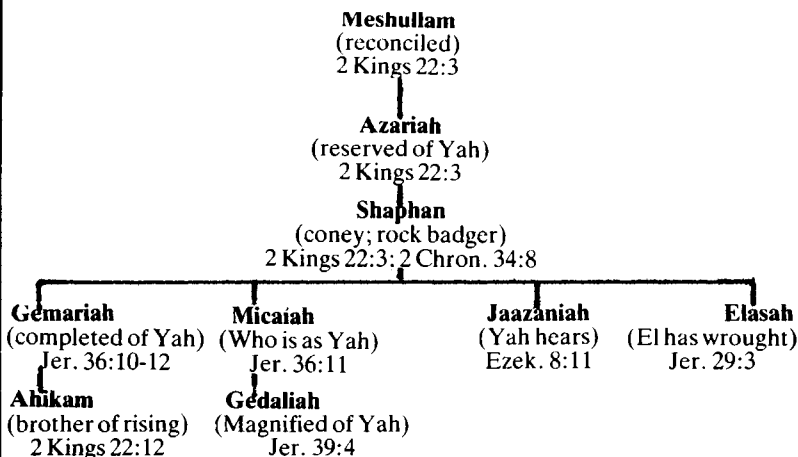
“**Earth**” — Heb. *eretz* — land (RSV and others).

VERSES 13-14 Third Abomination

VERSE 14

“**Tammuz**” — Known variously to ancient pagans — a Syrian and Phoenician idol; Greek Adonis; Babylonian Bacchus (*the lamented one*); Egyptian Osiris; The consort and the son of Ashtaroth (Phoenician — 1 Sam. 7:3); the Queen of Heaven (Jer. 44:17). Greek Astarte (Ishtar) — identified by Hislop as Semiramus the wife of Nimrod, and by others as the wife of Ninus, Nimrod’s successor. From the feast of Ishtar comes the “feast” of Easter. Tammuz was a sun-god who was killed as the lushness of Spring gave way to the drying heat of Summer. Ishtar mourned his loss, and descending into the nether regions, she brought him back to a resurrection as winter gave way to Spring. No doubt it is significant that in the post-captivity Hebrew calendar the 4th month (Sacred year), 10th month (Civil year), was called Thammuz (agreeing about our month July). At this time each year Tammuz was mourned by women devotees.

This family played an important part in this period of Israel’s history. We have recorded:



On Tammuz

Peloubet — The name means *son of life*. Originally the sun-god, primarily of Babylonia; slain by a wild boar while hunting, and mourned long and vainly by the goddess Ishtar. He is generally identified with Adonis of Greek mythology, whose story is practically the same. According to Sayce, the Canaanites called him Adonai (lord), from which, when the myth reached Greece, came 'Adonis'. A festival in honour of Adonis was celebrated at Byblos in Phoenicia, and in most of the Grecian cities, and even by the Jews when they degenerated into idolatry. It took place in July, and was accompanied by obscene rights.

Unger — Tammuz was an ancient Akkadian deity whose worship spread throughout the Semitic world. He was the husband and brother of Ishtar, the Babylonian goddess of procreation. In Babylonian legends Tammuz supposedly died in the fall, when vegetation dried up. He departed to the nether world, being recovered by the wailing Ishtar. Bursting buds of springtime marked his return to the upper world. Tammuz cults are thought to be referred to in Jer. 22:19; Amos 8:10; Zech. 12:10. The 4th Babylonian month, corresponding to July, was named in honour of this god, which in post-Biblical times, became the name of the 4th month to the Jews. The Tammuz-Ishtar cult was degrading, and thoroughly inconsonant with the chaste worship of Yahweh.

VERSES 15-17 — Fourth Abomination

VERSE 16

“**Inner court**” — See sketch.

“**Porch . . . altar**” — Traditional place for petitioning Yahweh — but facing the Tabernacle! (Joel 2:17).

“**About 25 men**” — The reason for this number is not known (see 11:1). Apparently an ‘inner core’ of elders (priests).

“**worshipped the sun**” — They “turned the back,” and in association with the women, worshipped the sun god (see Deut. 4:15-20; Jer. 2:26-27; 44:15-19).

VERSE 17

“**Branch to their nose**” — Comp/B. suggests a certain vile sex practice is indicated; ‘My’ changed to ‘their’ by Sopherim — “they flaunt it before Me”.

Chapter 9 — Divine Retribution — The Wicked Slain; The Righteous Spared

VERSE 2

“6 men” — There are 6 Babylonian princes listed in the AV as deciding the fate of Jerusalem after its fall (Jer. 39:1-3), but it must be noted that grave doubt exists as to whether some of the names given are proper names or titles (see other versions). It may well be that there are but 4 listed in Jeremiah; or 6 if the proper reading is Nergel-sherezer, Samgar-nebo, Sarsechim, the Rabsaris (chief of the eunuchs), Nergal-Sherezer (a second one), and the Rabmag (chief of the soothsayers). In Ezekiel 9 the word for “man” is *ish*, meaning a male person. It is often used to describe a superior person, a great man. The word for “men” in verses 2,4,6 is “enosh” — mortal men and women, weak, vulnerable, but impressionable for good or evil.

In v. 1 those in charge are the angels, who are represented in v. 2 by the generals of the Babylonian army as performing the work delegated to them by the angelic controllers, who in turn are directed by Yahweh (Psa. 103:20).

Among these six is a seventh angel, instructed to mark the righteous for preservation from the destruction brought about by the other six. Ezek. 9 may well be a prophecy fulfilled in Jer. 39, with the slaying of many, but the saving of a few, of whom Ezekiel was a representative man (v. 8) — e.g. Jeremiah himself, Gedaliah (grandson of Shaphan, nephew of Jaazaniah). In the prophetic sense we may think of the “one man” clothed with the linen of righteousness, who, passing through the city, and setting a mark “upon the foreheads” of the men (enosh) who “sigh and cry for the abominations that be done”. May we, you and I, be among those so “marked” for rescue and salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 10 — The “Glory” Departs

The same linen-clothed man (ish — great man) is commanded to take fire from between the Cherubim (see Ch. 1) and to scatter it over the whole city — the judgment of the One upon the Throne to be pronounced and executed. He receives it from the hand of the Cherub (here ‘man’ is adam: v. 8,14,21 — a significant indication of the human origin of the cherubim). The same Cherubic vision as in Ch. 1 but note v. 14 where the “ox” face is described as a “cherub” face; stated in v. 22 to be “the same faces”. Simply a different designation for the same face.

VERSE 1

“**In**” — Should read “above” as in Ch. 1:26 (NEB “above”; RSV “on”). The Throne of Glory.

“**Man**” — In this chapter “ish” in verses 2,3,6 of the man clothed with linen; and “adam” in verses 8 and 21 of the “man’s hand”, and in verse 14 of the second cherubic face.

VERSE 2

“**Wheels**” — *Galgal* here and in the first instance in verse 6 — a rolling thing, as Isaiah 17:13 — the nations to be chased as chaff before a whirlwind. Also in verse 13 “O wheel” (see margin), and in verses 23:24 and 26:10.

In every other instance (25), Ezekiel uses *orphan* — a revolving thing and used particularly of chariot wheels (e.g. Exod. 14:25 concerning the wheels of the Egyptian chariots).

Chapter 11 — The “Glory” Departs

VERSE 1

“**Jaazaniah**” — Not the same man as in Ch. 8:11. Evidently a brother of Hananiah, the false prophet with whom Jeremiah contended (Jer. 28:1). Men false to their calling:

Hananiah — *Yah is gracious*.

Jaazaniah — *Yah hears*.

Pelatiah — *Yah has redeemed or delivered*.

A different group from the 25 of Ch. 8:16 — there priests, here “princes of the people”. They contended the city would not fall and should be defended at all costs (see Jer. 38:1-4).

(It must be significant that, notwithstanding they were great ones in Judah — ‘princes of the people,’ and Ezekiel calls them “ish” (verse 1), they are described by Yahweh as “enosh” — men, weak, vulnerable. How often is His assessment different from ours!)

VERSES 2-3

Therefore their advice — cf. mgn. & RSV “the time is not near for us to build houses”, i.e. let us bend all our resources to defence — this city is the caldron, we as flesh are confined within it.

VERSE 4-12

Their simile turned against them — “you have slain men in this caldron; *they* are the flesh. But *you* shall be taken out of it — your punishment shall be ‘in the border of Israel’.”

VERSE 13

“**Pelatiah died**” — A symbol pronouncing the end of “redemption” and of “deliverance” from Yahweh (see v. 1).

VERSES 14-15

Those who were in exile were now disowned by those who were left in Jerusalem. But as Pelatiah's death foretold, they themselves were doomed (v. 21).

VERSES 16-20

Hope for Israel rested with the exiles, who would turn again to Yahweh. They would be protected and regathered. (An initial fulfillment in Ezra and Nehemiah; a greater yet to come).

“A little sanctuary” — To be understood as “a sanctuary for a little while” (see RSV, and compare Ch. 37:26).

VERSES 21-23

The Glory has gone; to return to Jerusalem no more until the events of Ch. 43 take place.

VERSES 24-25

Ezekiel's tongue loosed, and he gives the message of hope to his fellow-exiles.

The end of the vision beginning with Ch. 8.

The Departure of “the Glory of the Lord”

1. Ezekiel is taken in vision to “the door of the inner gate (of the Temple in Jerusalem) that looketh toward the north”. There he sees “the glory of the God of Israel” — the Cherubim:—
Ch. 8:3-4. ①
(Note — from Ch. 10:1 it appears that the Occupied Throne of Ch. 1:26-27 was not at this time apparent).
2. He is taken to “the door of the court” to witness the blasphemous behaviour of the 70 men (the Sanhedrin):—
Ch. 8:7.
3. He is taken back to “the gate of the LORD’S house toward the north” to see the women weeping for Tammuz:—
Ch. 8:14.
4. He is taken to “the inner court of the LORD’S house” to watch “about five and twenty men” worshipping the sun, with their backs to the Temple:—
Ch. 8:16. ③

All this was justification for what he was to be made to perceive — the departure of the Divine Presence from Jerusalem and the Nation of Israel. The steps are detailed as:—

- (1) “The glory of the God of Israel” moves from the Most Holy ② “from off the cherub whereon it had been” (Roth; Young) (Exod. 40:34-35; 1 Kings 8:10-13; Psa. 80:1,19; 99:1; Isa. 37:16), to rest at “the threshold of the house”:—
Ch. 9:3 ③
- (2) The Cherubim move from the Altar gate ① to the south side of the house:—
Ch. 10:3 ④
(over them now is “the appearance of the likeness of a throne” — Ch. 10:1; see 1 above and Ch. 1:26-27).
(At the same time “a” (Roth) cloud fills the *inner court* — Ch. 10:3).
3. “The glory of the LORD” is lifted up “over” (RV) the threshold of the house:—
Ch. 10:4 ③
(The AV of this verse is confusing — the “Glory” already stands at the threshold. Note the marginal reference “Heb. was lifted up”, and the italicised “and stood” in the text. Young renders “And become high doth the honour of Jehovah above the cherub, over the threshold of the house” — i.e. the Glory is lifted now from “to the threshold” (Ch. 9:3) to be higher than the cherubim standing at the south side of the house).
(The cloud now fills the *house* — Yahweh’s Presence has departed from it — and the *court* is filled with “the brightness of the LORD’S glory” Ch. 10:4).
- (4) The Cherubim are lifted above ground level; still at the south side of the house:—
Ch. 10:15 ④

(5) The “Glory” moves from the threshold of the house and stands “over the cherubim”:—

Ch. 10:18 ④

(6) The Cherubim, with the overshadowing Glory, move to “the east gate of the LORD’S house”:—

Ch. 10:19 ⑤

(7) Ezekiel is now moved to this same gate:—

Ch. 11:1 ⑤

He sees here a final illustration of impending judgments, yet with a promise of Yahweh’s continuing mercy (Ch. 11:1-21).

(8) The Cherubim and the Glory move to the Mount of Olives.

Ch. 11:22-23 ⑥

Thus the ‘Glory’ is depicted as departing Yahweh’s house in 5 stages, as though to give Israel time for repentance —

1. From the Most Holy to the Threshold.
2. Lifted above the Threshold, preparatory for further movement.
3. To a position over the Cherubim on the South side of the House.
4. To the East gate.
5. To the Mount of Olives.

Yet there is the promise of a return; that Yahweh will take up His “residence” in a much more glorious and purified House of Prayer, not only for Israel, but for all peoples of the earth (Ch. 43:1-7). And the manner of the Return of Yahweh’s Glory will be quite different — no hesitation then!

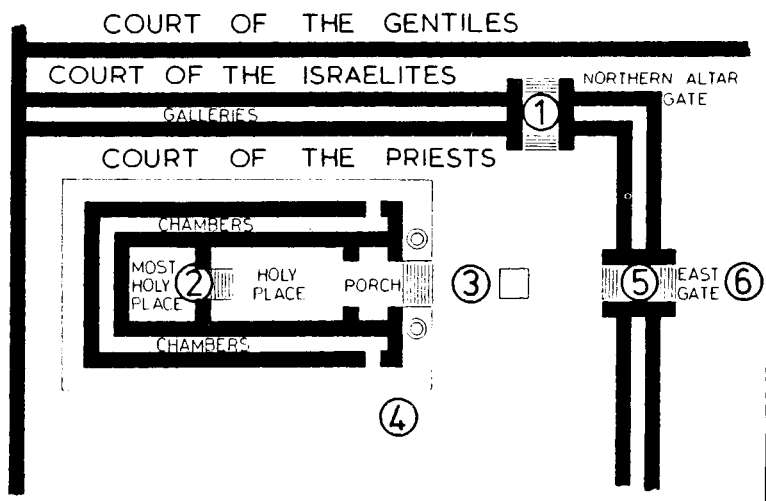
1. The House erected, cleansed and sanctified.
2. The people redeemed, transformed in heart and mind.
3. The “Glory” moves directly from the Mount of Olives, via the east gate, into the Most Holy, “where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever”.

This is the ultimate fulfilment of the parable portrayed in Ezekiel 8 to 11, but there is an “intermediate application which must not be overlooked. It relates to the Lord Jesus Christ — “the Word became flesh, and pitched his tent among us, and we gazed upon his glory — a glory as an Only-begotten from his Father. Full of favour and truth” (John 1:14 Rotherham). Upon his rejection by his own people, he left the city by way of the East; stood upon the Mount of Olives; and then, ascending into heaven in a cloud (Acts 1:10-11), he left them to receive in themselves the rewards of their evil doings. And he, of course, is the “Prince” who will lead his faithful and glorified saints back through the East gate as depicted in Ezekiel 43:4.

THE GLORY LEAVES

EZEKIEL CHAPTS. 8-11

SEQUENCE	EZEKIEL	GLORY	CHERUBIM
1	Northern Altar Gate of the Inner Court	8 : 3,4	—
2	The Most Holy Place	—	9 : 3
3	The Threshold of the House	8 : 16	9 : 3
4	The Right Side of the House	—	10 : 18
5	In the East Gate of the House	11 : 1	10 : 19
6	Out of the City, East upon the Mt. of Olives	—	11 : 22,23



Part III (Section 1) — In The Glory's Absence — Israel's Position and Fate Foretold

Chapters 12 to 24

This Part consists of visions and prophecies concerning Israel, Judah, Jerusalem; and the people of Israel in general.

The messages were given to Ezekiel before and right up to the very day the siege of Jerusalem began, culminating in Ezekiel's personal tragedy, the loss of his beloved wife, as a type of Judah's tragedy.

Yahweh had sent His prophets among them — “rising up early and sending them” — but they had refused to hear them, and chose instead the prophets and prophetesses of their own choice and kind — those who would “tickle their itching ears”.

The elders had refused to shepherd the people; instead they had fed themselves of the people.

So Yahweh told Jeremiah:

“The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means (RSV “at their direction”); and My people love to have it so” (Jer. 5:31).

All were guilty, all would be punished — “And what will you do when the end comes?” (RSV).

Chapter 12 — Zedekiah's Captivity in Sign

VERSES 1-16

See 2 Kings 25; 2 Chron. 36:11-21; Jer. 25:8-11; 32:1-5; 39.

VERSES 17-20

Famine and desolation decreed.

VERSES 21-28

The vision is certain; the time is at hand, not afar off.

Chapter 13 — False Prophets, Prophetesses

VERSES 1-16

“Against the prophets” — v. 2 cf. Jer. 23:9-32. They did not strengthen the people with truth; rather they encouraged them with false prophecies of safety. So that the people built a (figurative) wall (*chayits* — only occurrence, indicating a slight, even imaginary wall) of confidence and the prophets coloured it with whitewash! The Babylonian storm would beat it to the ground. (Refer Isa. 28:2 of Israel earlier).

VERSES 17-23

“Against the prophetesses” — v. 18 RSV “who sew magic bands upon all wrists, and make veils for the heads of persons of every stature in the hunt for souls”. The exact practices have been lost, but they were witchcraft divinations that destroyed all the moral and spiritual fibre of the people.

VERSE 18

“Pillows” — Heb. *kesathoth* — a covering. Also v. 20. Roth. renders as “oracle cases”.

Chapter 14 — The Hopelessness of Judah — At Home & In Exile

VERSES 1-11

“Against the elders of Israel in captivity” — v. 3 cf. Ch. 20:3. They were not genuine enquirers. Whether they openly worshipped idols was of no consequence, they had set them in their hearts, which was far worse. Yahweh would punish them. Again, as was the case with the “princes” in the land (Ch. 11:1-2), these “elders” of the exile were in the estimation of Yahweh but ‘enosh’ — men, and weak vacillating, vulnerable, and culpable men at that!

VERSES 12-23

“Against the people in the Land” — In Ch. 8 is enumerated the 4 great sins or abominations being committed in Jerusalem. Here are the 4 corresponding punishments to be meted out — sword, famine, evil beasts, pestilence. And when Ezekiel saw the survivors and witnessed for himself their practices, he would know that God had been just (vv. 22-23. cf. Jer. 14:12; 15:2-5). And even the great intercessors of the past — Moses and Samuel (Jer. 15); Noah, Daniel and Job (Ezek. 14) could not hope to turn Him from His declared purpose — they could but save themselves! (The mention of Daniel is of special interest — he was Ezekiel’s contemporary; his fame as a righteous man had spread far amongst the captives in Babylonia).

Here too we have another telling use of Hebrew words regarding mankind. In verses 14, 16 and 18 these 3 men, like the princes in the land and the elders in exile (v. 3), are designated as 'enosh' — mortals. But what a contrast there is between those who had set up their own gods and worshipped them, and these who had won the respect and consideration of the only true God, to "deliver their own souls by their righteousness", despite their affliction with the same human disabilities of the others. We can do the same!

In verses 13, 17, 19 and 21, "man" is *adam* i.e. generic mankind.

Chapter 15 — The Parable of the Fruitless Vine

See Ch. 17; Psalm 80:8-16; Isaiah 5:1-7, and compare John 15:1-11.

The wood of the vine, when cut, was of little use and Israel, symbolised by the vine, is of no more value when cut from the source of its being. Fit only for the fire, to the fire it shall go.

Chapter 16 — Jerusalem — Foundling Child; Adult Whore

"Jerusalem, the City" — Conception, birth, growth, espousal, marriage, adultery, punishment; worse even than her sisters, yet she shall be redeemed, "for My Holy Name's sake".

VERSE 3

Before taken by David, the city had been in the territory of the Canaanite, Amorites, Jebusites (Gen. 15:16-21).

This is figurative language. The early Amorite had occupied the East and the North to Hermon, and the Hittite the South in Hebron. So the nation was born of their "father" and "mother" territory, in the midst of a hostile people. Jebus was first a Canaanitish city.

VERSES 4 & 5

Though Joshua and others fought it, they never appear to have occupied it (see e.g. Judges 1:1-8).

VERSES 6-14

Growth under David and Solomon, in the name of Yahweh (Deut. 12:5) who became her "Husband" (Ruth 3:9-14 "spread my skirt over thee" Jer. 3:14; Isa. 54:5).

VERSES 15-34

Of the "union" children were born, but the wifely and motherly duties toward them had been abused, and they had not been brought up with true filial respect for their Father; many being "sacrificed" on their mother's extravagances.

Meanwhile, she herself had played the harlot — with the Assyrian and the Egyptian, and others; even taking of her Husband's wealth to bribe them to consort with her. So she was worse even than the harlot, who accepted hire for the bestowal of her favours! (vv. 32-33).

VERSES 35-43

The vengeance of an outraged husband to be exacted.

VERSES 44-63

Proverb involving Sodom, Samaria and Jerusalem as sisters, the daughters of the Canaanite Hittites (from Heth the second son of Canaan). The early Amorites occupied the land East and North to Hermon; the Hittites were in the South to Hebron. All three cities were included in the territory.

VERSE 46

The terms used seem to import:

elder — greater

younger — lesser (mgn)

daughters — surrounding villages

left hand — "to the north of thee" (RSV)

right hand — "to the south of thee" (RSV)

Even they in their wickedness were not as guilty as God's chosen, Jerusalem! Yet, because of His covenant, He would turn again her captivity, and theirs, in the regeneration of the whole land.

Chapter 17 — A Riddle & A Parable (or an enigma and a dark saying)

VERSES 1-10 — The enigma.

VERSES 11-21 — The solution in Ezekiel's time.

VERSES 22-24 — The extended application.

VERSES 3-4

"Great eagle" — Babylon (v. 12) — Nebuchadnezzar. cf. Jer. 22:20-28; Nebuchadnezzar had taken Jehoiachin to Babylon (see v. 12; 2 Chron. 36:8-10).

VERSES 5-6

"Zedekiah" — (vv. 13-14; 2 Chron. 36:11-21) who was enthroned by Nebuchadnezzar and had sworn allegiance to him. Thus as a low-spreading vine, he was sustained by Babylon. But he rebelled (2 Chron. 36:13).

VERSES 7-10

"Another great eagle" — Egypt; not so magnificent as the first. See v. 15; Jer. 37:1-11. Pharaoh Hophra, who temporarily relieved Jerusalem's siege. But its sustenance would soon dry up.

VERSES 11-21

The solution outlined. See notes above.

Note v. 19 — the human oath broken brought its human retribution; Zedekiah had done much worse (2 Chron. 36:12) in despising his royal oath to Yahweh — Divine retribution would come upon him.

VERSES 22-23

The allegory for the future —

The eagle had taken a twig and planted it to produce a low-spreading vine. “I — Yahweh — also will take a branch and plant and nourish it, to produce a goodly cedar”. An undoubted prophecy of Messiah. *Note RSV* — “a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar, and will set it out; I will break off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and I Myself will plant it upon a high and lofty mountain”. From the house of David should he come forth, “whose right it is”.

VERSE 24

May be paraphrased as: “And all the Gentile nations (trees of the field) shall know that I, Yahweh, have brought down the glory of Israel under David and Solomon (the high tree) to a state of poverty; and I will revive it to a state of moderate standing (the low tree) under Ezra and Nehemiah, but I will dry it up again (the dried up green tree) for its unfaithfulness (cf. Luke 23:29-31). But yet again will this dry tree sprout and flourish when My Kingdom shall be established and My son as its king (Isaiah 53). I Yahweh have spoken and will perform it” (NASB) “Will do it” (RSV). Note the future tense.

Chapter 18 — The Eating of Sour Grapes — Inherited & Individual Responsibility

A Proverb — Eating Sour Grapes

The import of the proverb as used was — “God is not righteous in punishing *us* for the sins of our fathers”. The import of the reply was — “While it is true that the misdeeds of one generation are felt often ‘unto the third and fourth generation’, it also is true that every man is rewarded or punished for his own deeds and *you* are punished for your own misdeeds as well as for any of the past”.

The chapter elaborates this point. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die”, and conversely, “the righteous soul shall live”.

Three touchstones are given —

1. *Worship* — of Yahweh or of idols.
2. *Filial duties* — faithful or unfaithful.
3. *Social & Community duties* — generosity or oppressiveness.

Chapter 19 — A Dirge For Israel's Princes ("Lion's Whelps") and For Judah's People (a "Wasted Vine")

A Lamentation in Two Sections —

vv. 1-9 The lioness and her whelps.

vv. 10-14 A further parable of the vine.

VERSE 1

"Princes" — These had been Jehoahaz (2nd son of Josiah), Jehoiakim (1st son of Josiah), and Jehoiachin (son of Jehoiakim) to the time of this chapter.

VERSE 2

"Mother" — Judah. Josiah died under 40 yrs of age; his 3 sons were but "whelps".

VERSES 3-4

This must be Jehoahaz, who was enthroned by the people (2 Chron. 36:1). He was deposed by Pharaoh after only 3 months (2 Chron. 36:2-4; 2 Kings 23:31-33).

VERSES 5-9

Here we have a difficulty. Jehoiakim succeeded, but he was enthroned by Pharaoh, and not by the people, as v. 5 seems to require. After 11 yrs. he was deposed by Nebuchadnezzar "to carry him to Babylon" (2 Chron. 36:6). But did he go there? It is suggested that he committed suicide, and 2 Kings 24:6, seems to lend credence to this.

Jehoiachin followed, enthroned by the people (or so it seems). He lasted only 3 months and was taken to Babylon (2 Chron. 36:9-10). So whether Jehoiakim or Jehoiachin is intended here is open to question — the likelihood is that it is Jehoiakim, because of the shortness of Jehoiachin's reign.

VERSES 10-14

The symbol of the vine (Ch. 17:5-6) taken up again in a more comprehensive sense. It had been strong and healthy; it had borne "strong rods" as sceptres for such as David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and Josiah. But now it was broken, withered, dried, consumed by fire; and its surviving off-cuts were struggling "in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty ground" (i.e. in Judah which had been wasted, and in Babylon where they were cut off from the source of their Spiritual and National sustenance).

V. 10 is better understood as "in a vineyard" (RSV) rather than as "in thy blood" (there is no question about the meaning of the Heb. *dam* — it means "blood"; but Strong gives it a secondary meaning "by analogy the juice of the grape", and the AV mg. "in thy quietness, or

in thy likeness”). Judah had been a vine planted by abundant waters, and fruitful; now she was “plucked up” and transplanted, and struggling to remain alive. Whereas in more prosperous times the rulers (e.g. David) had strong rods (*matteh* — branches e.g. Solomon) to carry on the kingdom and to hold the sceptre (*shebet* — symbol of rulership in this place); now from those who ruled had the fire of national destruction flared up to destroy the fruit (people), and even the very kings themselves. With the weak, faithless Zedekiah the vine was destroyed, until Yahweh’s promise should have its fulfilment — “There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots” (Ezek. 21:27 cf. Isaiah 11:1).

Chapter 20 — Israel’s History of Rebellion — Yahweh the Judge and Deliverer

“I wrought for My name’s sake”

VERSES 1-4

Another year has passed from Ch. 8, and now “the elders of Israel” are before Ezekiel again (see Ch. 14). Ezekiel is told again “I will not be enquired of” by them — but if *you* will, then detail for them their iniquities!

“**Judge**” — Heb. *shaphat* — usually rendered as “judge” but sometimes as ‘plead’ (see Ch. 17:20; 20:35-36; 38:22). And so their past and present abominations are outlined —

VERSES 5-32

The rebellious history of Israel outlined in 5 periods:—

- vv. 5-8 In Egypt
- vv. 9-12 In the Exodus
- vv. 13-27 In the Wilderness
- vv. 28-29 In the Land
- vv. 30-32 In the Present

VERSES 25

“**Statutes that were not good**” — Only in the sense that they brought death because they did not keep them (Rom. 1:18-32).

VERSE 29

“**Bamah**” — Means “the high place”. Israel had followed the despicable practices of the nations around them.

VERSES 33-44

The future triumph of Yahweh’s Name, when the rebels will be purged and Israel saved — “not for your sakes, but for My holy Name’s sake” (vv. 8-9; 13-14; 21-22) cf. Psalms 78 & 79.

VERSES 37-38

A picture of sheep being counted and passed through into separate holding pens, with the rebels being culled out. A Messianic promise of the Day when the sacrifices of Israel on Yahweh's holy mountain will be an acceptable odour to Him.

VERSES 45-49

These verses are introductory to Ch. 21.

Chapter 21 — The Sighing Prophet The Sharpened Sword

The throne overturned . . .until.

CH. 20:45-49

“**Toward**” — In the first instance. Heb. *derek* — the trodden path, i.e. all the way to the south. In the second instance (and in 21:2) Heb. “*el*” — a motion towards. Rendered “against” (NASB). Also rendered “against” in Ch. 21:2,3,4.

“**South**” — In the first instance. Heb. *teman* — the right hand side of one looking East. In the second instance Heb. *darown* — the South.

“**South field**” — Heb. *negeb* — parched land — the south from its dryness.

“**Forest**” — Heb. *yaar* — forest or wood or a copse of bushes. In the dry areas of the south a copse of bushes rather than a forest.

Nebuchadnezzar is on the move; Jerusalem is doomed; all the land would be scorched by the coming fire of war and destruction, from the far North to the far South; all would suffer, old and young, male and female.

VERSES 8-17

The sword sings, the people are slain; My fury shall be assuaged. It is Yahweh's sword, in the Babylonian hand.

VERSES 18-27

More sign language, to be fulfilled in Nebuchadnezzar's present march. He has two objects in view — to subdue the rebellions of both Jerusalem and Rabbath of Ammon. But which first? He comes to the parting of the ways — left to Rabbath, right to Jerusalem. He divines — shakes arrows — which way do they point?; consults teraphim; looks in the liver of a slain animal for guidance — Jerusalem! And so the siege begins in Zedekiah's 9th year. The Glory is about to leave, and it will not return until . . . (vv. 25-27).

VERSES 28-32

Ammon shall not escape though. More detailed prophecy concerning it is in Ch. 25:1-7.

Chapter 22 — Judgment on Jerusalem — Three “Sayings” of Yahweh — The Sins of all the People

VERSES 1-2

Ezekiel is challenged — after all you have seen and heard, will you still plead (Heb. *shaphat* — Ch. 20:1-4) for your people? Rather, you should, and will, “make her know” (mg.) the sins of Jerusalem’s people.

VERSES 3-16

Blood is shed in idol-worship, false judgment, murder; pollution of moral attitudes; adultery and fornication.

VERSES 17-22

Moral pollution is such that no purity remains.

VERSES 17-23

Priests are apostate; princes oppress; prophets speak falsely; the people are evil; none are righteous. In every aspect of life, in every group, there is abomination.

“**Therefore** have I recompensed their own way upon them”.

Chapter 23 — Aholah & Aholibah — A Parable of Infidelity

“**Aholah** — mgn. — *she has her own tent, (or tabernacle)* — see 1 Kgs. 12:28.

“**Aholibah** — mgn. — *My tent (tabernacle) is in her* — 1 Kings 8:29.

VERSES 1-35

In many respects a parable with the same intent as Ch. 16. Both Samaria and Jerusalem, espoused to one Husband, had played the harlot — Samaria with Assyria and its idols (see e.g. 2 Kings 16 and 17), and Jerusalem with the Assyrians, Babylonians and the Egyptians (2 Kings 18 to 25). Samaria had been betrayed and destroyed by the Assyrians (vv. 1-10), yet Jerusalem refused to be warned; *her* sins were even greater and she would drain the cup from which Samaria had drunken (vv. 11-35).

VERSE 23

“**Pekod**” — An Aramean tribe dwelling in the plain East of the Tigris, near its mouth (see also Jer. 50:21).

“**Shoa**” — Probably the Sutu, mentioned in the Armana letters; Syrian nomads who invaded the East Tigris country, and joined with the Arameans.

“**Koa**” — The Kutu, located East of the Tigris, and South of the lower Zab (Ungers Bible Dictionary).

VERSES 36-49

A repetition for emphasis of the sins of both cities; and the punishments to be exacted to cleanse the land. Again we find the challenge “Will you still plead (*shaphat*—ch. 22:2) for them? Rather, show them their abominations”.

Chapter 24 — The Year of the Siege — Parables of Boiling Pot & Mourning Prophet

VERSES 3-5

Another parable, taking up the saying of the “princes of the people” in Ch. 11:3.

Those who remained now in the city could not hope to escape — the pot would come to the boil, and they would be the flesh within it. “Pot” is ‘*cirah*’, as is ‘caldron’ in Ch. 11.

“**Bones**” — In vv. 4,5 (twice) and 10, the Heb. *etsem* (bones; substance). In v. 10 ‘wood’ is ‘*ets*’ (a tree, wood). RSV, NEB render ‘bones’ in “burn the bones” as “logs.” Ginsburg renders as “wood”. It would appear the text has been mutilated, and ‘*ets*’ — ‘wood’ is intended.

VERSE 6

“**Scum**” — RSV ‘rust’, Comp. B. ‘verdigris’.

“**Lot**” — RSV “without making any choice”; all to be involved.

VERSE 7

RSV “for the blood she has shed is still in the midst of her” (refer notes on ch. 11).

VERSES 8-14

“She has not covered her shame, I will see that it is exposed, and I will see that she receives her due reward”.

VERSES 15-18

The death of Ezekiel’s wife. He was a priest, and the restrictions of Leviticus 21:1-5 rested upon him — though a wife is not included in the enumeration here, the Heb. ‘*sheer*’ would include her. But now, as a further “sign” to the people, he was forbidden to show publicly his grief. The curiosity of the people was aroused, and the message of doom of vv. 19-24 was driven home.

VERSES 19-23

The meaning asked and given. Zion, the desire of *their* eyes, would “die”. Then would they recognise how wrong they had been, and mourn for their iniquities (a story that is to be repeated Zech. 12:10-14).

VERSE 24

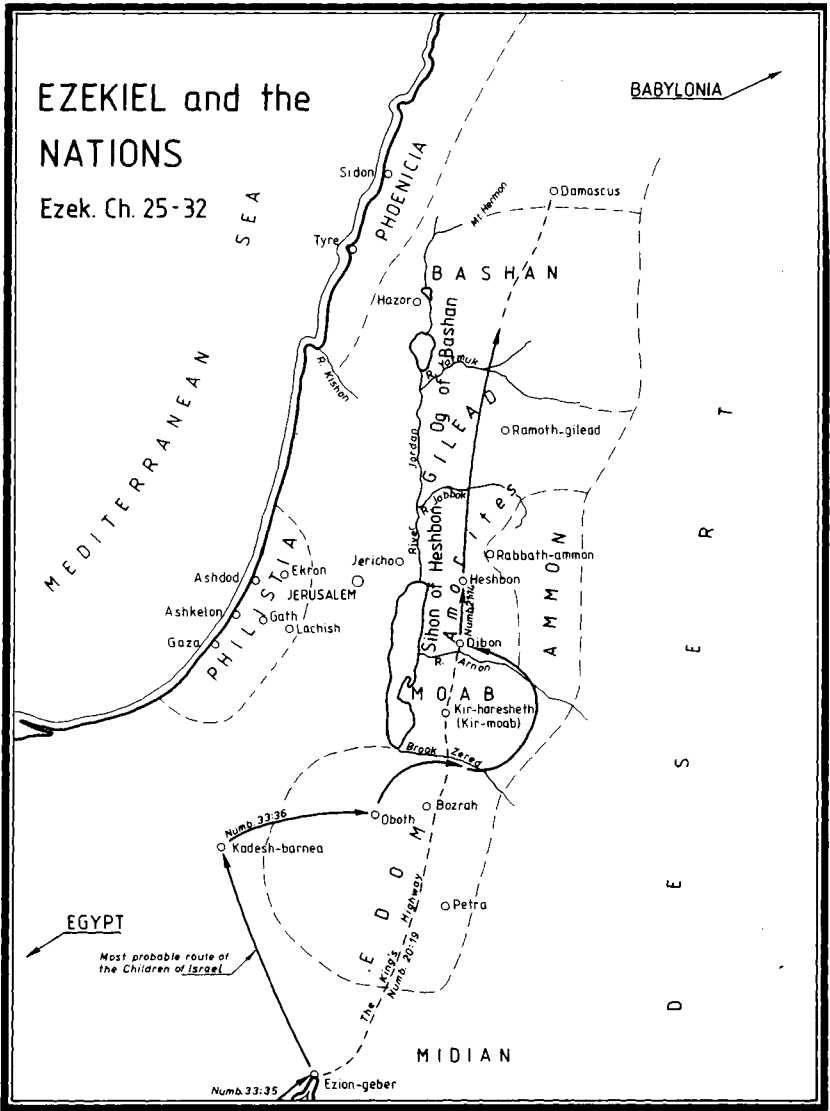
“**The Divine message**” — As Ezekiel has done, so shall you, for your grief shall be as his — and remember, when it comes, from Whom it comes, and why.

VERSES 25-27

When the messenger should come, Ezekiel’s tongue would be loosed (see Ch. 3:24-27; 33:21-22). Two years yet had to elapse! And *then* they would know that he was a prophet! See 2 Kings 25:1; Jer. 52:4; Zech. 8:19 (fast of the 10th month) regarding the siege.

EZEKIEL and the NATIONS

Ezek. Ch. 25-32



Part III (Section 2) — In The Glory's Absence — Destiny of Offending Nations

It always has been the lot of the nation of Israel to be surrounded by hostile nations; anxious to see its destruction and ready to do everything possible, openly and actively, or furtively and clandestinely to bring it about.

This animosity in some cases, went right back to the beginnings of the various races — some came from Lot, some from Esau; and consequently the distrust and hatred was bred into them.

The rise to pre-eminence of Israel under David and Solomon fanned the burning fires. David's military campaigns had weakened, even decimated some of them; and Solomon's commercial ventures had prevented their recovery.

They rejoiced, therefore, to see the nation divided; then the Northern section destroyed by the Assyrian; and now the Southern section under attack by the Babylonian.

But Yahweh pronounced against them.

Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel each have a section of their prophecies devoted to this theme:

	Isaiah	Jeremiah	Ezekiel
Ammon		49:1-6	21:28-32; 25:1-7
Assyria	10:5-19		
Babylon	13; 14:1-28	50; 51	
Damascus (Syria)	17	49:23-33	
Edom	34:5-8; 63:1-4	49:7-22	25:12-14; 35
Egypt	19	46	29 to 32
Elam (Persia)		49:34-39	
Moab	15	48	25:8-11
Philistia	14:29-32	47	25:15-17
Tyre	23	47:4	26 to 28:19
Zidon		47:4	28:20-24
Nations in general		25:15-26; 27:2-3	

Chapters 25 to 32 — Prophecies Before The Fall Of Jerusalem

Following the “Suggested Chronological Order” chart, we have first the prophecies against Egypt.

Egypt

CHAPTER 29:1-16

“10th year” — Jerusalem now under siege (Jer. 39:1-2).

“King of Egypt” — Hophra (or Apries) — (Jer. 44:30). *Note* the contest as defined — Pharaoh, who claimed divinity, and spoke of “my river, which I have made” (v. 3); against Yahweh, Who said “I will make Egypt desolate — I am against thy rivers” (vv. 9-12). “My river, which I have made” no doubt refers to the extensive canal systems which enabled Egypt to flourish.

VERSE 6

See 2 Kings 18:21; Isaiah 36:6.

VERSE 10

See margin — “from Migdol to Syene” (confirmed by other versions). Indicates extreme North and South of Egypt — Migdol near the Mediterranean and Syene being modern Aswan, near Ethiopia.

VERSES 12-16

The 40 years lost to history. Possibly refers to v. 19 which speaks of the defeat of Hophra’s successor Amasis II by Nebuchadnezzar in his 37th year (Jer. 46:24-26).

CHAPTER 30:1-19

Egypt’s “helpers” condemned with her. Virtually an extension of Ch. 29:1-16. Depredations of Nebuchadnezzar in Egypt from Migdol (the tower) in North-eastern border to Syene in the far South on the border of Ethiopia (cf. v. 6; Ch. 29:10). The whole territory would be overrun and put to sword and famine. Note that many Jews who had fled from Jerusalem would now be caught in the holocaust (see Jer. 44:1).

CHAPTER 30:20-26

3 months later; 3 months before the fall of Jerusalem. A further prophecy of Egypt’s fall before Nebuchadnezzar. Egypt’s power was waning — as a man with a broken arm, which had not been splintered and bandaged (“roller”). Hophra had sent an army to relieve the siege of Jerusalem; it had been soundly beaten and gone into retreat. But worse was to come — both arms would be broken! (v. 22). And Yahweh’s sword, in Nebuchadnezzar’s hand, would surely prevail.

CHAPTER 31

Almost 2 month's later. Egypt's fall would match that of Assyria, which Egypt knew so well. It is to be noted, however, that some versions (see RSV, Comp.B. note to v. 3) relate the whole chapter directly to Egypt, without reference to Assyria. It does not matter much, the message is clear. In the "garden" of the LORD, Egypt had been as a high cedar, well-nourished, tall, and strong. But it would be cut down by "el goyim" (v. 11) of the nations, and many nations would be shaken at its fall.

Here ends the prophecies concerning Egypt at this time. Others come after the fall of Jerusalem — see Ch. 32.

AMMON

CHAPTER 25

"**Ammon**" — Was mentioned in Ch. 21:28-32.

VERSES 1-7

V. 3. Probably refers to 2 Kings 24:2 and subsequently the captivity of Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24:8-16).

Ammon was the son of Lot's second daughter (Gen. 19:38). Josephus states that Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Ammonites, together with the Moabites, in the fifth year after the destruction of Jerusalem. It appears also that the nomad tribes of the East then infiltrated the survivors, and Ammon disappeared (Vv. 7,10).

MOAB

CHAPTER 25:8-11

Moab was the son of Lot's first daughter (Gen. 19:37). Here allied with Edom (Seir). Destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.

EDOM

CHAPTER 25:12-14

Edom was from Esau (Gen. 36:1,43). Always unfriendly to Israel. Outlasted Ammon and Moab. King Herod was an Idumean. John Hyrcanus (Maccabeus) conquered Edom and incorporated it in Judah (note v. 14). See also Ch. 35.

PHILISTIA

CHAPTER 25:15-17

About the 12th century BC a people moved from Greece or Crete, and endeavoured to settle on the coast of Egypt. They were repulsed, and then settled along the eastern coastal plain of the Mediterranean, becoming known as *Philistines* (immigrants or wanderers). Generally they were a thorn in the side of Israel. They virtually disappear after the time of Ezekiel.

TYRE

CHAPTER 26 to 28:19

It may seem strange that this small city-state should receive almost as much attention as the mighty power of Egypt. But Tyre had very close associations with Israel, especially in the reigns of David and Solomon, when a very real friendship existed. But the situation had greatly changed since then.

Tyre was a great trading city; in many ways the trading mart where East met West. And much of its Eastern trade had perforce to pass through Israel's territory, with the consequent payment of tolls.

CHAPTER 26

VERSE 1

The eleventh year was the year of Jerusalem's fall. The month is not given, and it is not possible to be certain. It would seem from the words ascribed to Tyre, that it was after the fall of Jerusalem in the 4th month.

VERSE 2

Now Tyre hoped for free, toll-free passage for trade.

VERSE 3

Situated on the shore-line, Tyre had experienced the destructive power of the sea.

VERSES 4-21

Began to be accomplished immediately. Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Tyre after Jerusalem fell B.C. 587 and it held for 13 years. He was not able to subdue it entirely, but he ruined its trade. At the same time he attacked and devastated Egypt — referred to by Yahweh as Nebuchadnezzar's "wages" for performing Yahweh's punishment upon Tyre (Ezek. 29:17-21; 16 years later).

Tyre had an advantage — half a mile off-shore was an island fortress and even when Nebuchadnezzar had entered the mainland Tyre (vv. 7-13), he lacked the maritime equipment or experience to attack the

island, to which the populace had fled. But where he failed, Alexander the Great, of Greece, succeeded some 250 years later — and in the process completed the fulfilment of the prophecy. He used the stones, timber, and even the dust of the streets of the mainland city to build a causeway to the island. Tyre has become “a place for the spreading of nets” and it is claimed that 3 attempts to rebuild the old city have failed (vv. 5,14,21).

Chapter 27 — Tyre Lamented By All Who Profited by Her

VERSES 3-7

The dirge envisages Tyre as a ship, sailing the sea of nations, and finally sunken on the high seas by the “east wind” (v. 26). This would seem to refer to Nebuchadnezzar, even though the final message, as in Ch. 26, is “you have come to a dreadful end, and shall be no more for ever” (v. 36 RSV).

VERSES 8-9

The mariners — drawn principally from the towns of the Mediterranean coast.

VERSES 10-11

The men of war — mercenaries from all countries.

VERSES 12-25

Her merchants — spread all over the known world.

VERSES 26-36

Her mourners — compare the language of Revelation 18.

CHAPTER 28

“**The prince of Tyre**” — Probably a term relating to the rulership in general.

VERSES 1-10

A common claim of rulers of the time was an association with the “gods” (god in vv. 1-2 — *el* and *elohim*). Tyrians were worshippers of Baal (Moloch) and Ashtoreth. “But you are a man — and will suffer the death of a man” (cf. v. 2 with v. 9).

VERSES 11-19 The Dirge for the Fall, and Death to Come

VERSE 13

The extent and nature of the wealth of Tyre.

“**Eden**” — As appears from Gen. 2:8 Eden was an extensive tract of territory. Tyre had operated all over Eden — in this context apparently referring to Jerusalem (v. 14).

VERSE 14

The AV & RSV give a different impression.

AV — Tyre had been a protecting power. “Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth”.

RSV — Tyre had been granted protection by Yahweh. “With an anointed guardian cherub I placed you”.

“**stones of fire**” — Possibly relates to the “precious stone” covering of v. 13, which, reflecting the light of the sun, gave the appearance of fire.

VERSES 15-19

Tyre had been faithful in earlier days — but not now. And she would fall in consequence, and would “come to a dreadful end, and shall be no more for ever” (v. 19 RSV).

Zidon

CHAPTER 28:20-24

“**Zidon**” — Was a grandson of Ham, being Canaan’s firstborn (Gen. 10:15). He settled on the Mediterranean shore and established the city of Zidon, some 20 miles north of where Tyre was later established. In many centuries, and in many ways (political, commercial, and especially religious), Zidon had been a “pricking brier” to Israel — and it would suffer punishment at the hands of Israel’s God.

PROMISE FOR ISRAEL

CHAPTER 28:25-26

Inserted in the record at this point of time, as Jerusalem was about to fall, and Ezekiel has proclaimed the last of his prophecies against the nations before that terrible event, we find these two remarkable verses.

Israel surely would be scattered, but in mercy Yahweh would remember. The offending nations would receive their due rewards; at the appointed time Israel will be regathered, “sanctified” in the eyes of the nations, dwell safely in their land, “and shall know that I am the Lord their God”.

“**Safely; confidence**” — Heb. *betach* — securely and trustfully.

THE STONES OF FIRE

It is the opinion of the writer that this verse refers to the stones on the Breastplate of the High Priest, which in turn have a relationship to the Encampment Order of the Children of Israel. (See Exod. 28: 16-21; Numb 2.) But in applying this suggestion a problem arises — there are 12 tribes, 12 stones; but in Ezekiel there are 9 stones only. However, if we can accept the Septuagint (LXX) Version of Ezek 28:13 the problem largely dissappears.

Numb. 2	Ex. 28:15-21		Ezek. 28:13		Hebrew Text
	A.V.	LXX	A.V.	LXX	
<u>East</u>					
Judah	Sardius	Sardius	Sardius	Sardius	Odem
Issachar	Topaz	Topaz	Topaz	Topaz	Pitdah
Zebulun	Carbuncle	Emerald	Emerald	Emerald	Barekath
<u>South</u>					
Reuben	Emerald	Carbuncle	Carbuncle	Carbuncle	Nophek
Simeon	Sapphire	Sapphire	Sapphire	Sapphire	Sappir
Gad	Diamond	Jasper	Daimond	Jasper	Yaholam
<u>West</u>					
Ephraim	Ligure	Ligure		Ligure	Leshem
Manasseh	Agate	Agate		Agate	Shebu
Benjamin	Amethyst	Amethyst		Amethyst	Achlamah
<u>North</u>					
Dan	Beryl	Beryl	Beryl	Beryl	Tarshish
Asher	Onyx	Onxy	Onyx	Onyx	Shoham
Naphtali	Jasper	Chrysolite	Jasper	Chrysolite	Yashepheh

Notes: (taken principally from Unger's Bible Dictionary)

1. In some areas the text is "absolutely hopeless" to define accurately the exact stones referred to by the Hebrew word. So the Carbuncle and Emerald should be reversed in the A.V. (R.V. Margin)
2. It is believed that the "ancients" had no way of engraving a Diamond, and the "Yaholam" refers to "the Onyx, Alabaster, or Jasper" (so the LXX has 'Jasper' for Gad).
3. The LXX actually reads "Chrysolite, Beryl, Onyx" for the Northern Tribes, in both Exodus and Ezekiel. Other Commentators give "precious stones of different colours" as the meaning of "Yashepheh", so its meaning is quite indefinite.

CHAPTERS 25-32 Prophecies After The Fall of Jerusalem

EGYPT

CHAPTER 32

Jerusalem fell in the 11th year, 4th month, 9th day of Zedekiah's reign (2 Kings 25:3-9; Jer. 39:1-2). The AV indicates that Ezekiel did not receive the news for 18 months (33:21). This does seem to be much too long, and Moffatt, following Ginsburg, suggests that the original text read "11th year", which appeals as being more reasonable.

VERSE 1

Ezekiel now no longer dumb (Ch. 33:22). This is now 20 months after Jerusalem fell (11th year 4th month to 12th year 12th month).

VERSE 2

The RSV is more expressive — "You consider yourself to be a lion among the nations, but you are like a dragon in the seas; you burst forth in your rivers, trouble the waters with your feet, and foul their rivers".

VERSES 3-10

The figure of the dragon (crocodile) followed through. Yahweh's net to catch him, and he would be left upon the shore for the "beasts of the earth" to devour.

VERSES 11-16

The figure expounded as the work of Babylon on Yahweh's behalf. With the dragon thus destroyed the rivers of the nations would run clear.

VERSES 17-32

vv. 1-16 directed against Pharaoh; vv. 17-32 a dirge for the people and the land of Egypt. The month of the same 12th year not shown — v. 1 would indicate it was the 12th month, but the Septuagint states the 1st, thus preceding the lamentation of v. 1-16 (RSV, NEB, Moffatt all follow the Septuagint).

Egypt and its people were to join the nations of the past in "the nether parts," where they are silent in the affairs of men and nations — Assyria and her "company" of subject and allied peoples; Elam, Meschech and Tubal with their "multitudes"; Edom and Zidon with their "kings and princes".

"**Asshur**" — The first capital of Assyria.

"**Elam**" — In early days a predominant Eastern power.

"**Meschech and Tubal**" — Settled in the Black Sea/Caspian Sea

areas. Ezekiel records a strange circumstance concerning them. Unlike all the others, though in the “nether world” (RSV), “they do not lie with the fallen mighty men of old who went down to Sheol with their weapons of war” (v. 27 RSV). It is a statement that seems to defy explanation, other than to accept the RV mgn. — “Shall they not lie . . .?” and the NEB — “Do they not rest . . .?”

“Edom” — See notes on Ch. 25:12-14.

“Zidon” — See notes on Ch. 28:20-26.

CHAPTER 29:17-21 Egypt — Babylon’s Wages

The last of Ezekiel’s visions in the 27th year (i.e. 2 years after the glorious vision of the Temple — Ch. 40-48). The 13 year siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar had been only partially successful. Egypt was to be Yahweh’s “wages” paid for the service rendered in punishments inflicted on Tyre. History tells very little of how successful Nebuchadnezzar was in Egypt — we can be sure that it was sufficiently so as to satisfy the terms of v. 19 — he was to take “multitudes, spoil, prey”. See also Jer. 43:8-13. This is not a prophecy — it was an accomplished fact, if we can trust the dating:

1. The prophecy in the 27th year of Jehoiachin’s captivity — BC 598 plus 27 — BC 572-1.

2. The siege from BC 587 plus 13 — BC 574 (see notes on Ch. 26:4-21).

v. 21 is a problem. It contains 3 statements to be fulfilled “in that day”.

1. The “horn” (power) of Israel to bud forth.

2. Ezekiel’s mouth to be opened “in the midst of them”.

3. Israel to “know that I am Yahweh”.

None of these became effective with the punishment of Egypt—

1. Israel was still in captivity.

2. Ezekiel’s mouth had been “opened” some 15 years earlier (Ch. 33:21-22).

3. Israel did not acknowledge Yahweh in truth. Moffatt places the verse in double brackets, to indicate “a passage which are either an editorial addition or a later interpolation” (Introduction, Part 3). It would seem to fit better at the end of the previous chapter — when with Israel dwelling safely the Messianic promise will be fulfilled:—

1. The horn of Israel will bud — Psalm 132:7; Luke 1:68-75.

2. Ezekiel will be glorified and no longer “dumb”.

3. Israel and all others shall “know Yahweh”.

Part IV — Preparation For The Return of the “Glory”

1. Israel’s Revival

2. Punishment of enemies of Israel

Before it could come about that “My Glory shall fill the earth” and “They shall know that I am Yahweh”, tremendous changes must take place.

These must be in individual, national, and physical areas. Within Israel, the heart of the individual must be changed from “stone” to “flesh”; the Nation must be returned to its homeland, and caused to acknowledge their Saviour and their God; while within that land the House of Yahweh must be rebuilt; Israel’s enemies must be punished, disciplined, and caused to acknowledge the rightful place of Israel, and the One Who claimed that nation as His own.

In Part IV most of this is foretold; there remains then but the building of the “House of Prayer for all Nations”.

CHAPTERS 33 to 39

CHAPTER 33 — Ezekiel recommissioned as a Watchman

In the changed circumstances following the fall of Jerusalem, Ezekiel is re-commissioned. He was now respected as a prophet whose word had come to pass — not that they would heed him any the more! (vv. 30-33).

VERSES 1-20

The re-commissioning. Now it is a combination of Ch. 3 and 18. *The section divides readily:*

vv. 2-6 General duties of any watchman

vv. 7-9 These duties applied specifically to Ezekiel. A repeat of Ch. 3:17-19.

vv. 10-11 A repeat in essence of Ch. 18:31-32

v. 12 A repeat in essence of Ch. 18:26-27

vv. 13-16 A repeat in essence of Ch. 18:21-24

vv. 17-20 A repeat in essence of Ch. 18:25-30

The eternal attitude of mankind was manifest among Ezekiel's people — they were warned; they ignored the warning; then when evil came upon them, they blamed God for their troubles!

VERSES 21-22

See notes under Ch. 32. So now he was to “cry aloud and spare not”. He no longer was dumb.

VERSES 23-33

Divides into two sections:

vv. 24-29 — Addressed to those still in Judea. Even now they would not face the facts! “Abraham was but one man, and of him came a nation; we are still many, we can rebuild the nation and the land”! How futile, in view of the Divine decree so plainly told to them!

vv. 30-33 — Neither would those who were in captivity heed, though they had a prophet of Yahweh among them! They would hear Ezekiel, because he had been justified by past events, but they would not do what was commanded.

Chapter 34 — Shepherds: False and True

The basis of the condemnation of the false shepherds of Israel was laid over a long history but in Ezekiel's own time was appropriate to the reign of Zedekiah. Now the sheep were scattered abroad, and no man could regather them (vv. 5-6).

Divide the chapter —

VERSES 2-6

The shepherds' neglect of Yahweh's sheep. They ate the food themselves, they ignored the weak and the sick. Even worse, they “killed” of the flock for their own advantage.

VERSES 7-10

For this Yahweh would hold them to account.

VERSES 11-16

Yahweh would manifest Himself to be the true shepherd, Who would search for and find His sheep in the places of their scattering (“search” — Heb. *darash* — to trace steps). Then He will examine carefully their state of health, and provide all they need (“seek” — Heb. *baqar* — to lay open for inspection).

VERSES 17-22

But the flock itself was not guiltless. It had been perverse and disobedient. The strong had deprived the weak and in the way of animals, had “thrust with side and with shoulder”.

VERSES 23-24

A “good shepherd” promised (taken by Jesus and applied to himself — John 10). The promise goes further, to include other faithful shepherds under him (see Isaiah 40:11; Jer. 3:15; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). David — the beloved — Christ.

VERSES 25-31

Then shall be “a covenant of peace” between Yahweh and his redeemed flock (note esp. vv. 26-27; see also Micah 7:18-20).

Chapter 35 — Israel’s Enemies Doomed

As Edom has been “prophesied against” already in association with Moab (Ch. 25:8-11), and separately (Ch. 25:12-14), it is strange, at first thought, to find a further chapter devoted to it. It does seem, however, especially in the setting in which it is found, that Ch. 35 is of more far-reaching import than as a restricted prophecy against the nation of Edom that Ezekiel knew.

In the restricted view, the prophecy fits Edom well enough. From the time of Esau there was a “perpetual hatred” against Jacob (v. 5), and it had persisted to modern times (see Psalm 137:7-9). And it had applied equally to both sections of the nation, Israel and Judah (v. 10). Due punishments would be rendered.

The wider application requires an application of derivatives. “Two manner of people” were born of Rebekah: Esau representing the nations; Jacob representing God’s nation (see Gen. 25:33; Heb. 12:16).

Edom was the changed name of Esau (Gen. 25:29-34), as Israel was the changed name of Jacob (Gen. 32:24-28). Edom means “Red”, and is closely associated with adam (— of the ground). Israel means “Prince of El” or “Preserver with El”. Judah means “Praise” (of Yah).

The enmity between these groups has been “perpetual” — Edom on the one hand; “Israel Judah” on the other hand.

So we are invited to look forward to the day of the “stretching out of Yahweh’s hand” upon all the enemies of His people; to the subjugation of His enemies; to the establishment of His Kingdom. And then “they shall know that I am Yahweh”. Chapters 36 to 39 detail the working out of His Divine Purpose.

Chapter 36 — A Transformed Land and People

The chapter divides into two sections:—

VERSES 1-15: Transformation of the Land

VERSES 1-7

The land cleansed of the “heathen”.

VERSES 8-15

The land, now fruitful, possessed by Israel, “My people”.

VERSES 16-38: Transformation of the People

VERSES 16-24

Israel scattered for iniquity, now regathered “for My holy Name’s sake”.

VERSES 25-32

Israel cleansed — a new spirit, and a new heart.

VERSES 33-38

Israel re-established in the land — now “like the garden of Eden”.

“Not for your sakes, but for My holy Name’s sake”.

“Ye shall know that I am Yahweh”.

Chapter 37 — A Revitalised and Reunited Nation

This chapter also divides into two sections:

Vv. 1-14 The Resurrected Dry Bones of Israel’s “House”.

Vv. 15-28 The Rejoined Sticks.

Vv. 15-23 “One nation upon the mountains of Israel”.

Vv. 24-28 “David My servant shall be king over them”.

VERSES 1-2

“**Valley**” — Heb. *biqah*; the same word as rendered “plain” in Ch. 3:22,23; 8:4. It is defined by Strong as “a wide valley between mountains”, and contrasts with “gay” rendered “valley” in Ch. 39:11,15, which indicates “a gorge, from its lofty sides, hence narrow, but not a winter torrent”. It is an interesting thought that Ezekiel probably saw the vision of Glory at the same place as he now sees a vision foreshadowing the time when “My Sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore” (v. 28 compare Ch. 8:6 where Yahweh is being “driven from My Sanctuary”).

“**Breath**” — (v. 5,9,10). “**Wind**” — (v. 9); “**Spirit**” — (v. 14) in each case is “ruach”. The Spirit of Yahweh will perform it.

VERSE 11

“**Quite cut off**” — (Rotherham) explains “cut off for our parts”.

“**Graves**” — (Heb. *qeber* — burying places marked for a remembrance). Not the usual word ‘sheol’. The political grave of the Israel-nation from which its resurrection is sure in the day when “I shall remember My covenant with thee” (Ch. 16:60-63).

VERSE 16

“**Judah — Joseph**” — The two dominant sections in the broken nation. Judah and “his companions”; Ephraim and “his companions”

represented: Judah, Benjamin, Levi and the 10 tribes of "Israel".

The birthright of Reuben entitled him to: 1. the governing privilege; 2. the priestly right; 3. "a double portion".

These were transferred to: 1. Judah (Davidic kingdom); 2. Levi (Aaronic priesthood); 3. Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh).

At the division of the nation into two separate kingdoms a separation of the birthright occurred also. When the two sticks become one again in the hand of the one whom Ezekiel typed, the whole birthright will vest in him, for to him is the right of kingship and priesthood and a "double portion" of his Father's possession.

(It is claimed by the Mormon doctrine that the stick of Judah represents the scroll of the Bible, and the stick of Ephraim or Joseph represents the scroll of the book of Mormon. The fallacy of this argument is obvious in two considerations —

1. The Hebrew word for "scroll" is *sepher* — see e.g. Isaiah 34:4. The word here rendered "stick" is *ets*, which is translated as "helve, pine, plank, staff, stalk, timber, tree, wood" etc., but never as "scroll". See Num. 15:32; 1 Kings 17:10; 2 Kings 6:6; Lamentations 4:8.

2. Verses 16-20 are taken completely out of context. Yahweh provides His own explanation in verses 21-28).

Chapters 38-39 — The Final Confrontation

A detailed exposition of these chapters is not to be attempted here — reference should be made to such works as *Elpis Israel* (J. Thomas), *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* (W.H. Boulton), and *Ezekiel's Prophecies of the Restoration* (H.P. Mansfield).

It is important to relate the powers named to the peoples Ezekiel knew to reside in certain areas, and then to translate them to the Powers residing in those areas in the time of which the prophecy speaks — "After many days"; "in the latter years"; "in the days when My people dwell safely"; when "the mountains of Israel have been brought back from the sword" — and so on, firmly establishing the time as being the final confrontation between "the kings of the earth", and "Yahweh and His anointed" (Psalm 2).

The powers named are:—

"Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal" (see RV, Rotherham, RSV, *Elpis Israel* and many others).

"Gog" is a title, not a proper name. It is associated with "Agag" — "Gog" is interpreted as meaning "to cover, surmount, top"; and "Agag" as "I will overtop" (Jackson, *A Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names*). The Septuagint renders Numbers 24:7 — "There shall come a man out of his (Israel's) seed, and he shall rule over many nations; and the kingdom of Gog shall be exalted, and his kingdom shall be increased". The contest to come shall be between the two — Israel's seed, and Gog and his companions. Those whom Gog shall "top" are identified as Central Europe (especially Germany), Moscow, Tobolski. Associated with him will be Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer

(France), Togarmah (Turkey), "and many people with thee" (Ch. 38:5-6).

In opposition will be Israel, Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarshish, and "all the young lions thereof" (Ch. 38:10-13). These are identified broadly as the peoples of the Arabian Peninsula and the whole English-speaking group of nations.

There still are a few who would challenge the identification of these nations as given here — although surely such challenges must be growing weaker all the time, in the face of mounting historical evidence, and current world developments.

The following extract from a 1919 edition of the magazine *The Graphic* may be helpful —

"The Scythian, or Tartar, tribe of *Ros*, mentioned by Byzantine writers of the 10th Century as being located to the north of Taurus, and by Ibn Foszlán, an Arabian of the same age, as dwelling on the banks of the Rha (Volga), has recently been acknowledged by consent of Russian ethnologists to be the origin of their name and people.

Mesheck was another Scythian tribe, known to classical writers as the Moschi. They are frequently mentioned in Scripture under the name of Meschek, and occur as Muscai in many of the Assyrian inscriptions. There is reason to believe that they ultimately took refuge in the Steppe Country, where they became known as the Muscovs, and gave their name to Moscow the old capital of Russia.

The clans of *Tubal*, a third Scythian tribe, are, under the name of Tuplai, associated with the Muscai in the Assyrian inscriptions. The Assyrian records place them in Lower Cappadocia, on the Southern flanks of the Taurus; but after a few centuries we find them driven up to the South-eastern coast of the Black Sea, and they seem to have subsequently continued their northward wanderings until they settled in Western Siberia, where they have given their name to the river Tobol, and also to the city and government of Tobolsk.

Thus, these three Scythian tribes of Asia Minor, which appear in olden times to have lived in close proximity, were gradually forced away from their pleasant habitation and fertile lands into the cold and inhospitable region of the Steppes; and are now united as Russians, Muscovites, and the people of Tobolsk in the great empire of the Czars.

If we keep their history in mind, it will, perhaps, give a peculiar significance to the words addressed to Gog — "I will cause you to return," which may have meant that in these latter times, these Scythians should make their way again to the country from whence they came; (and which they have already begun to do); until having recrossed the ridge of the Taurus, they have reached the plains of Mesopotamia and the banks of the Euphrates, where we first hear of them in the times of the old Assyrian Empire.

Tarshish — long centuries before the Christian era, Tyre was one of the most famous ports in the world, and the base of the naval power of the Phoenicians. To the ancient city, after a prolonged interregnum, naval power has once more returned, curiously enough, from the

country with which the Phoenicians, the great navigators and explorers of their age, established trading relations more than two thousand years ago. Thus the daughter has returned to her mother “over the sea of Tarshish” (the Mediterraeon) — Britain established in Palestine. See Genesis 10; 1 Chronicles 1.”

Though times and appearances change, the general outline of the events of the time of the “end” as given by our writers of the last century will be found to be correct as they unfold.

The prophecy speaks of the Gogian hordes being “brought forth” (Ch. 38:4), “driven forward” (Ch. 39:2 RSV and others) out of “the North parts” against “my people of Israel”. A challenge from Sheba, Dedan, and the Merchants of Tarshish is made, but it is futile. The Gogian hordes are in the ascendance, and all seems lost to Israel and its allies — “yet he (Gog) shall come to his end, and none shall help him” (Daniel 11:45); for, “saith Adonai Yahweh, My fury shall come up in my face . . . surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel . . . I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am Yahweh” (Ezekiel 38:18-23).

A terrible vengeance will be taken; the nations will be subdued; the Land of Israel will be cleansed; and the people of Israel cleansed morally and spiritually. This Ch. 39 goes on to describe:

VERSE 2

The A.V. is misleading. The passage is rendered better as “I will turn thee back, and drive thee forward” (or lead thee on) — see Comp. Bible, RV, Rotherham — thus to agree Ch. 38:4.

VERSE 6

Notice that in Ch. 38:3 and Ch. 39:1 Gog is spoken of as ‘Prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal,’ with Magog being omitted. Now Ch. 39:6 deals with Magog as being subdued by “fire” subsequently to the destruction of Gog and his immediate companions. Also to feel the effects of this “fire” are those who dwell “carelessly in the isles” [the word is “betach” — “to feel safe or secure, often without warrant or trust in God” (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament). It is used also of Israel in Ch. 38:8,11,14; 39:26, where it is rendered “safely”]. So along with Catholic Europe, all the remote corners of the globe will be effectively subdued.

VERSES 7-22

The cleansing of the Land; the acknowledgement by Israel and the Nations that Yahweh is King.

VERSES 9-10

The destruction of all weapons of war.

VERSES 11-16

Burial of all reminders of the holocaust, even to single bones. For this purpose a special burial ground will be allocated (see note on “valley” in Ch. 37:1-2).

“Graves” — Is from *qeber* — memorial sepulchres — compare Ch. 37:12-13.

“Valley of the Passengers” — East of Jordan. Passing it on the way to worship, the pilgrims will be able to witness the Memorial to rebellion of the past, and their mouths shall be muzzled against any talk of discontent or rebellion themselves (the word for “stop” is *chazam* — to muzzle; there is no word for the italicised “noses”). “Passengers” in verses 11,14,15 is from “abar” — those who cross over.

This will be the City of the dead, known as Hamonah — multitudes, and Hamon-gog — the multitudes of Gog.

VERSES 17-22

The events beyond Armageddon. With Christ and the saints now in Jerusalem, the call goes forth to all the world to submit. These verses tell of the same events as Rev. 19:17-21, couched in almost identical language, and undoubtedly referring to the massing against Christ and his saints of a confederated Europe under the leadership of “the false prophet” — after Armageddon. The decree has gone forth (Rev. 14:6-7); it has been defied; and now the final contest takes place.

As we read in *Eureka* vol. 2 pages 88-90 — “The fourth section of the Seventh Seal is the seventh and last vial . . . this fourth section of the Seventh Seal is divisible into two acts, or summaries of detail. The first relates to what may be styled ‘the first mission of the seventh vial’; the second ‘the second and third missions of the same’. The first angel mission forewarns the nations of what is prepared to burst forth upon them. It announces that the Hour of judgment has actually arrived. . . . This manifesto is proclaimed after the advent and resurrection and separation of the tares from the wheat at the judgment seat of Christ, and occupation of Jerusalem by the great king, and before the fall of Babylon. . . . To this proclamation succeeds the day of affliction, in which a great sacrifice is offered by Yahweh for the birds and beasts of prey — ‘the flesh of the mighty, and the blood of the princes of the earth’ — Lev. 23:27-32; Ezek. 39:17; Rev. 19:17”.

“Fowls” and “beasts” are used in Scripture to indicate nations (e.g. Dan. 4:12; Jer. 12:9).

“Sacrifice” is from “Zebach” — slaughter (see AV mgn.), but it is never used anywhere else in connection with a ‘slaughter’ in war, or as a general ‘slaughter’ of animals. It is the word used extensively to indicate especially the Peace, Vow, and Thanksgiving Offerings — e.g. Lev. 3:1 — “Zebach shelem — a slaughtering of (or for) peace; Lev. 7:12 — Zebach todah — a slaughtering of (or for) thanksgiving; Num. 15:3,18 — Zebach pala neder — a slaughtering in performing a vow. But it is used also in connection with sacrifices in general e.g. Exod.

3:18 — “let us go, we beseech thee three days journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice unto the LORD our God”.

So obviously we have in these verses some highly symbolic language. The nations have sent forth the cream of their armies — mighty men, the exalted (nasi — rendered ‘princes’ verse 18); in type “rams, well-fed lambs and he-goats, bullocks, fatlings of Bashan all of them” (Rotherham). And Yahweh shall ‘slaughter’ them. How the nations will be ‘sated’ and ‘drunken’ with war then, and ready at last to acknowledge Him as the Owner and Controller of all Creation, and His Son as His appointed Ruler over all the earth!

VERSES 23-29

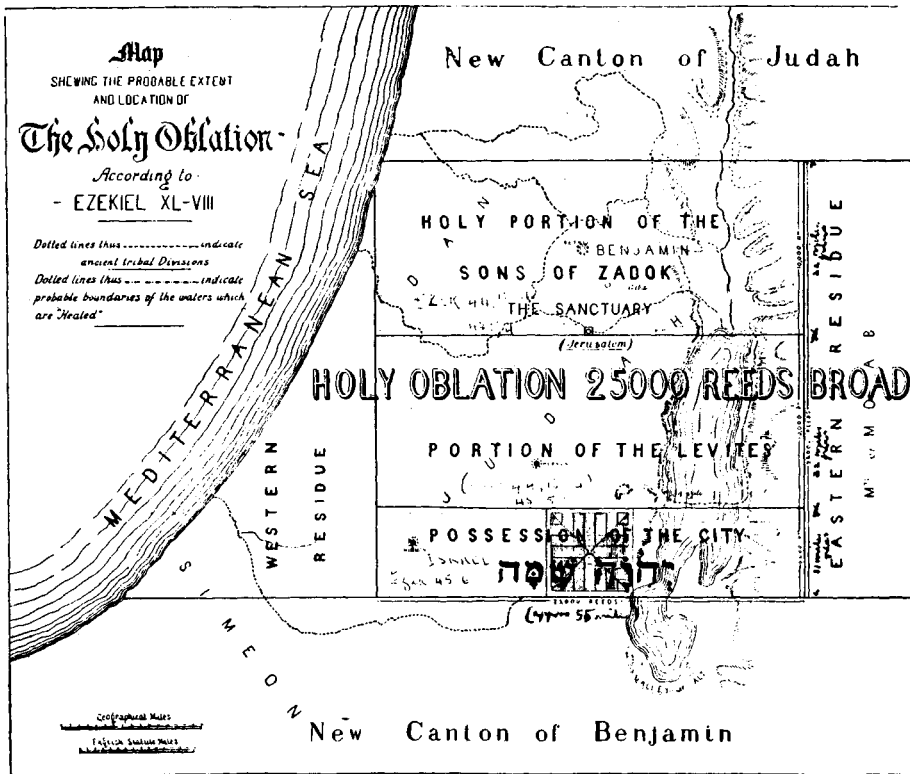
All the peoples of the earth then shall know and understand all that has happened — Israel was punished for its iniquities, but now has been regathered “for My holy Name’s sake”. Thus Yahweh shall be “sanctified in them in the sight of many nations”, and “the house of Israel” itself shall know and understand also, and shall acknowledge that “I am Yahweh their God”, “Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith Adonai Yahweh; this is the day whereof I have spoken” (Ch. 39:8).

The time will have come for the erection of the great House of Prayer for all nations, and for the return of the Glory.

But there is another event, not specifically referred to by Ezekiel, but inherent in such passages as Ch. 44:15-16 that should be referred to here — the return of Christ, the resurrection of the responsible dead, the judgment of them and the responsible living, the glorification of the accepted ones. For these, as the Multitudinous Christ, have much to do with what has transpired in Chs. 38-39, and what is to be spoken of in Chs. 40-48.

When shall this be? We do not know, of course, but we can be sure it will precede the events of Chs. 38-39. Armageddon is but a battle, albeit a terrible and decisive one, in what has been a protracted conflict.

The Divine timetable will ensure that when Gog has “entered into the glorious land”, and many shall be overthrown, and the land of Egypt also (Dan. 11:43); the Saintly Army will be ready. Then the Divine command will issue forth “Let Elohim arise, let his enemies be scattered” (Psa. 68:1); the Arab nations will be disciplined (Hab. 3:7); Egypt humbled and converted (Isa. 19); and the Cherubic host shall go forth on Yahweh’s work of vengeance and conquest. Then shall Yahweh “arise to shake terribly the earth” (Isa. 2:19-21). It must be the prayer of all who have understanding now that they may receive Yahweh’s blessing and mercy, and find salvation in that “Day”.



Part V: The Glory Returns — The House of Prayer for All Nations

Fifty years after the Great Passover of Josiah, and twenty-five years after Ezekiel was taken into captivity, he saw the grand vision we find recorded in such matter-of fact terms.

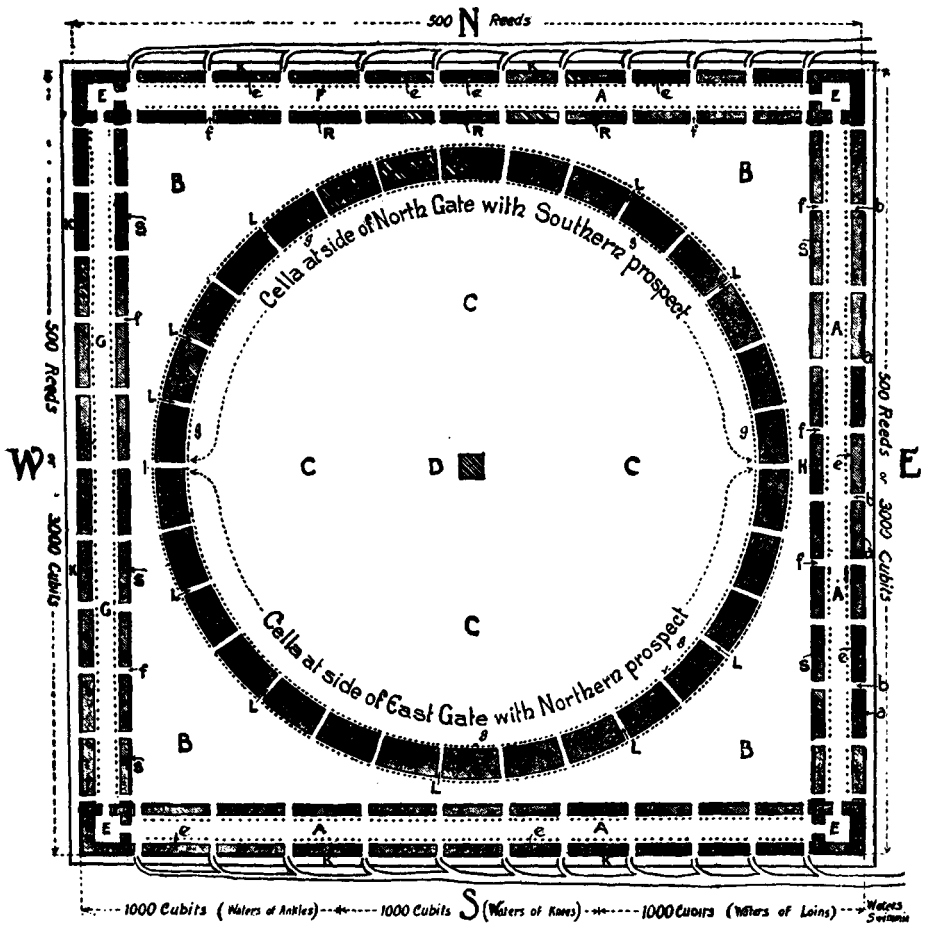
Josiah's Passover — 18th year; 14th Abib	B.C. 622
2 Kings 23:23	
Josiah's Death — 31st year	B.C. 609
2 Kings 22:1	
Jehoahaz 3 months; Jehoiakim 11 years	B.C. 598
2 Kings 23:31,36	
Jehoiachin 3 months; Zedekiah 11 years	B.C. 586
2 Kings 24:8,18	

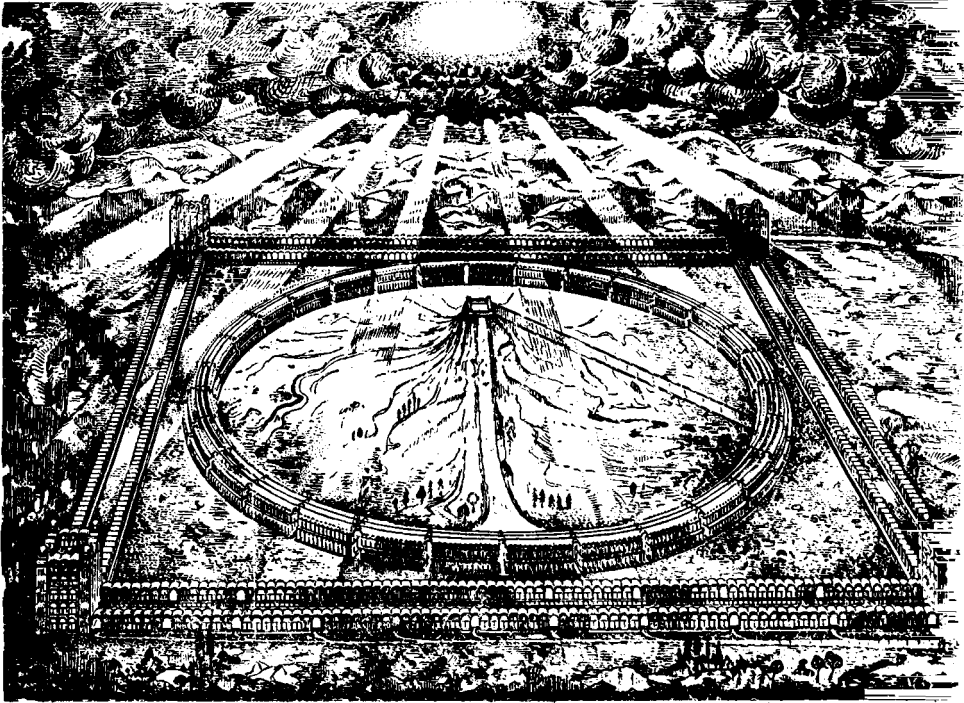
Ezekiel was taken captive with Jehoiachin in B.C. 597. Therefore the 14th year after 'the city was smitten,' and the 25th year of his captivity was B.C. 572, which was a Jubilee year from Josiah's Passover in B.C. 622.

Ezekiel saw the completed structure. Other prophets indicate something of the preparatory work — e.g. Zechariah speaks of the great earthquake that will re-shape the Land (Ch. 14), and incidentally, have widespread effects over the surrounding countries also. It is stated that beneath Jerusalem lies some of the finest building stone in the world — solid, durable white stone, marbles of red, pink and yellow, capable of a fine polish — no doubt to be revealed by the earthquake.

What the prophet saw he describes as "the frame of a city" — a huge building measured as about a mile square, with an outer range, and an inner circular range, set around the central mountain peak, topped by a great altar.

The exposition supplied in the book *The Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy* (Henry Sulley) seems without doubt to be as nearly accurate as any human being can produce; though few, without an architectural training, can really hope to have more than a vague conception of what this incredible building will be like. Only a very general outline will be attempted here, and any seeking further elucidation must be referred to the book named above.





Chapters 40 to 48

CHAPTER 40:1-4

The initial setting of the vision established. It was in “the land of Israel”, to the north of the Temple. He saw a “man” (ish — a certain, individual male — usually used of a superior). His appearance was like “brass” (bronze — Rotherham; Heb. “nechoshesh” — copper); representing flesh purified by fire. In type it must relate to Christ, the builder and the measurer. The man has in his hand a line of flax and a measuring reed.

The line — *pathiyl* — twine, thread, woven cord. It would seem to have reference to the saints, woven into one unbreakable “cord” or unit (Psa. 149:5-9; Rev. 2:26-29). In Ch. 47:3 a “line” is referred to again, but here the word is *qav*, from a root meaning to bind together. It is the same ‘man’, but now it is designated specifically as a measuring line, and therefore would seem here to refer to the “measuring reed” of Ch. 40:3, rather than to the *pathiyl* — see Zech. 1:16 compare Isaiah 34:17 where the word is *qav*.

“Flax” — *Pishteh* — carded thread. In Ch. 44:17-19 this word is rendered “linen”, and relates to the garments to be worn by the mortal order of Levitical priests when they enter “the gates of the inner court” in the course of their service on behalf of the people. In Ch. 40:3, however, it undoubtedly has an even higher connotation, referring to the glorified saints in the “hand” of the Christ — measurer — “for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (Rev. 19:7-8). Not to be put on and taken off again, as with the Levites, but to be worn for eternity, as the sons of Zadok, who “shall come near to Me, to minister unto Me” (Ezek. 44:15-16).

“Reed” — *Qaneh* — a reed or rod, here cut to a particular length, and used by the “man” to measure the dimensions of the Temple structure. It is defined in verse 5 as being of six cubits length by “the cubit and an hand-breadth”. Unger says of the cubit “it was commonly reckoned as the length of the arm from the point of the elbow to the end of the middle finger, about 18 inches . . . the common Hebrew cubit (in Babylonian times) was 17.72 inches and the long cubit 20.67 inches”. Henry Sulley adopted 24 inches for his calculations — “Ezekiel saw the angel use for the purpose of measure and construction a reed of six cubits long, each cubit being one cubit and one handbreadth. The equivalent of this in English measure is difficult to determine. Evidence at present accessible assigns as the length of the cubit and the handbreadth either 21 inches or 24 inches. Fortunately, so far as drawing a plan of the building seen by Ezekiel is concerned, it is not necessary to know the exact size of the cubit”. At 21 inches, the measuring reed was 10 feet 6 inches; at 24 inches it was 12 feet. Then the 500 reeds of the outside wall (Ch. 42:15-20) calculates at 5,250 feet or 6,000 feet.

Spiritually, the reed must speak of the rulership and overall control

by Christ — acknowledged mockingly by Herod's soldiers (Matt. 27:27-29).

“A man of brass, then, holding in his hand a line of flax and a measuring reed, is an appropriate figure of Jesus and his brethren, in visible, corporeal, and active manifestation during the building of the Temple on Mount Zion. Here is depicted the Son and his House (Heb. 3:6) — the Bridegroom and his Bride (Rev. 19:7) — the one New Man making peace (Eph. 2:15,22; 4:13)” — Henry Sulley.

“**And he stood in the gate**” — The Controller of the House; the arbiter of who may or may not enter (Rev. 3:12,21; 21:27).

CHAPTER 40:5-43; CHAPTER 42:15-20; CHAPTER 46:19-24

The measuring proceeded before the eyes of Ezekiel, that he might “declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel”. Few indeed of them comprehended; but what Ezekiel “declared” has become a source of wonder and inspiration to later generations of “Israel”. Henry Sulley again — “In the Temple of the age to come, when the Son of God builds the Temple of universal worship, all previous structures will dwindle into insignificance by comparison; a building whose facade is over one mile long, whose towers are 360 feet square and 480 feet high; whose outermost buildings are a *double* range of magnificent rooms, each 100 feet long by 50 feet wide, and perhaps 120 feet high in their several stories, is far, far greater in magnificence than anything the world has ever seen either in ancient or modern times. A building such as that specified in Ezekiel cannot be adequately described. Words fail to convey a due sense of its magnitude, but the Spirit of God in the prophets has indicated the wonder of its immensity thus:—

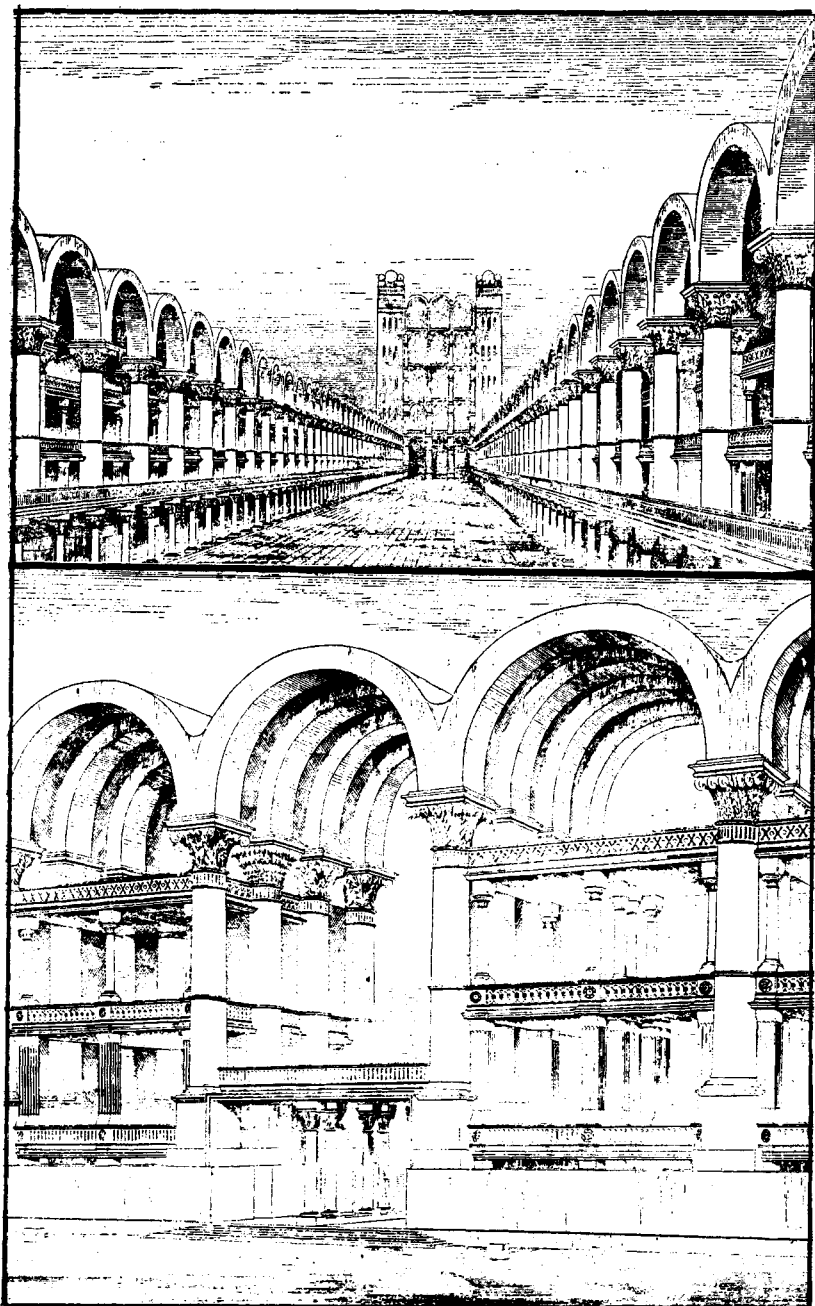
“Walk about Zion, and go round about her, tell the towers thereof. Mark well her bulwarks. Consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following” (Psalm 48:12-13)”.

In the passages listed here we find the measurements of the Outer Court range —

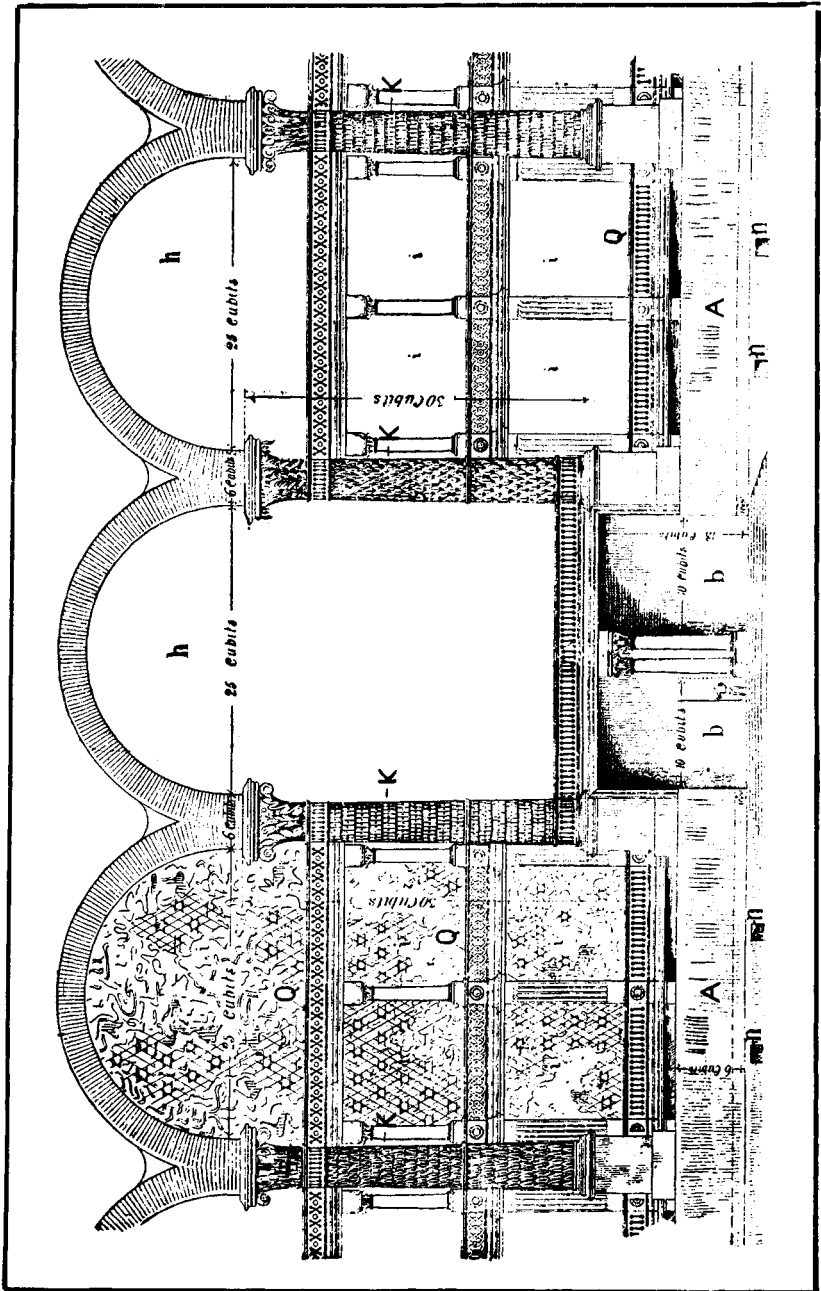
Ch. 40:6-19 the East
Ch. 40:20-23, 38-43; the North
Ch. 40:24-27 the South
And the Inner Court range —
Ch. 40:28-31 the South
Ch. 40:32-34 the East
Ch. 40:35-37 the North

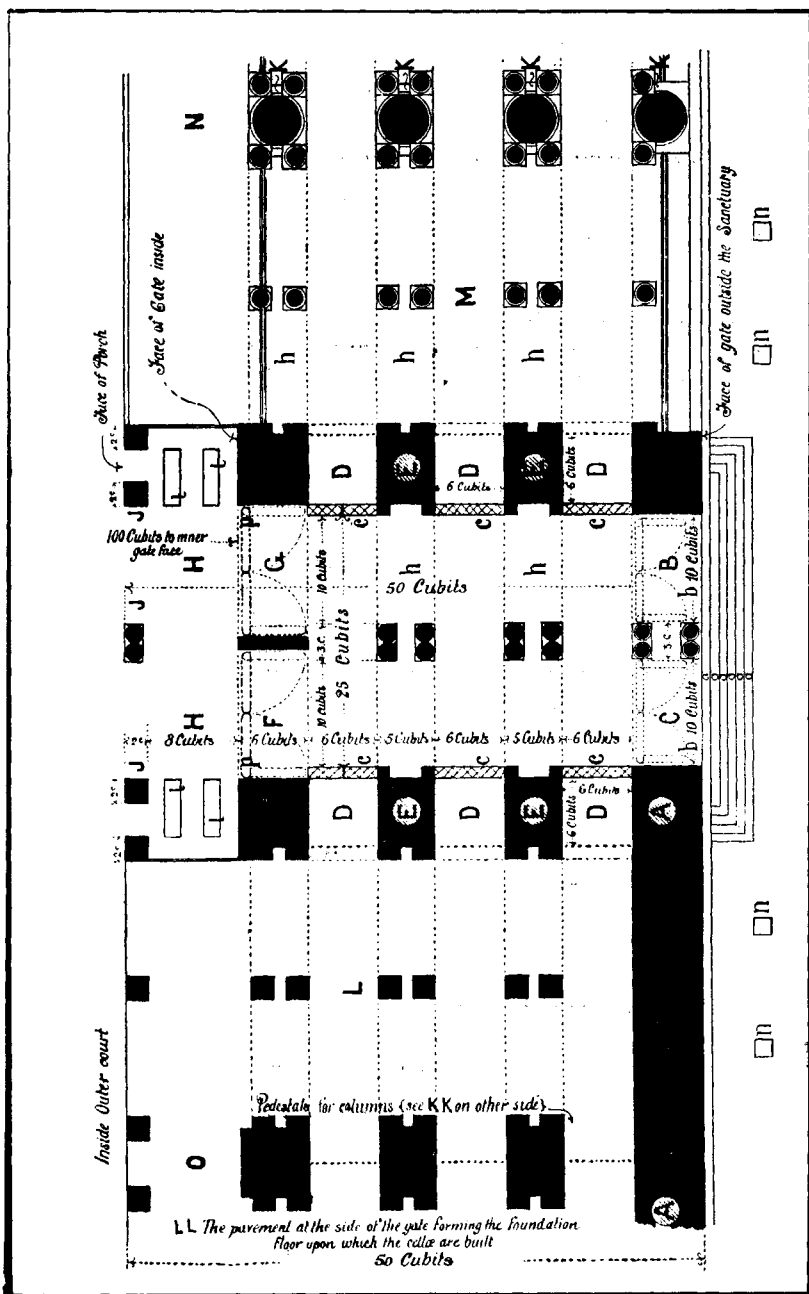
Some matters that arise are —

1. It is calculated that there are eleven “gates” to each outer wall, each with ingress and egress doorways. The foundation stone, running the full length of the structure, is 12 feet wide and 12 feet high; the colonnaded structure above some 100 feet high; at each corner is a tower 360 feet square and 480 feet high; the arches each 50 feet wide, as is each double doorway; the building is 80 feet in width with an inner porch 20 feet wide.



PERSPECTIVE VIEW OF GATE AND CELLÆ (Note Arabesques are omitted to show construction)





2. The north gate differs from the others in one respect. There are slaying blocks and washing blocks which are for “the burnt offering and the sin offering and the trespass offering” (Ch. 40:38-43).

3. There is no mention of the West side buildings in these descriptions. We are told only (Ch. 40:5) “behold a wall on the outside of the house *round about*”, and (Ch. 42:19-20) “he turned about to the West side, and measured 500 reeds — he measured it by the four sides: it had a wall round about 500 reeds long and 500 broad”. In the absence of anything to the contrary, one may reasonably conclude that it was essentially the same on the West side as on the others.

4. Then we find in Ch. 46:19-24, relative firstly to this West side (verse 20) that there are “boiling places” for the trespass and sin offerings, and “baking” facilities for the meal (grain) offerings. And Ezekiel then is shown “in the four corners” the majestic “kitchens” where all this is done — by the mortal priests on behalf of, and no doubt for the feeding of the multitudes who will come to worship here. These are the towers calculated to be some 360 feet square and 480 feet high (in verse 22 omit the italicised “cubits”, and read “reeds” as this is the “measure” used — Ch. 40:5. Thus we read $40 \times 12 = 480$, and $30 \times 12 = 360$).

5. The Inner Court range is separated from the Outer Court range by a courtyard some 160 feet wide, between the two covered porches (each 20 feet wide and 26 feet high). The Inner Court range is virtually the same as the Outer Court range facing the opposite way, as it were in a mirror.

CHAPTER 40:44-49; CHAPTER 41; CHAPTER 42:1-14

At Ch. 40:44, Ezekiel is moved from a consideration of the Outer Court Ranges, and now is caused to examine the Central Range — the Temple. It seems that he stands on the central “mountain”, and looks first to the North (verse 45), and then to the South (verse 46). If the “prospect” (*panim* — face) is toward the South, the building must be North of the point where Ezekiel is standing. He is told that these North quarters are for “the priests, the keepers of the charge of the house”, and the South quarters are for “the priests, the keepers of the charge of the altar” — terms which are defined in more detail later (Ch. 44).

Verse 47 relates to Ch. 43:12-17 — the great Altar.

Then Ezekiel moves to the inner “porch” of the Temple itself (vv. 48-49), and watches while the Temple buildings are measured. It is revealed as a circular range of 30 buildings, each about 400 hundred and 50 feet in length, 200 hundred and 60 feet in width, 200 hundred feet in height; separated the one from the other by a covered-way 40 feet wide. Thus a continuous range of porticoes is presented to his view, each 34 feet wide on the outside, and 32 feet wide on the inside

The area separating the Outer (Square) Ranges, and the Central (Circular) Temple is the "Separate Place" of the Inner Court. At each corner the distance between the two is 200 feet (Ch. 41:13-14).

Some definitions here may be helpful:

1. The "frame of a city" — the Outer Ranges, visible to Ezekiel as his first impression (Ch. 40:2).
2. The "Temple" — the Central Range — the circular buildings surrounding the Most Holy (Ch. 41:1).
3. The "Most Holy" — the area inside the Temple, containing the "Mountain" on the top of which is the Altar (Ch. 43:12).
4. The "Separate Place" — that area between the Outer Ranges and the Temple, which will be used for the passage of worshippers from North to South or from South to North — see Ch. 46:9 (Ch. 41:12-15).

An interesting question arises — will those who bring animal offerings enter from the North, where the slaying and washing tables are; while those who bring meal (grain) offerings enter from the South? There does seem to be an inference that this will be so.

5. The "Sanctuary" — the translation of two Hebrew words — *qodesh* (e.g. Ch. 41:21); and *miqdash* (e.g. Ch. 44:1). The term "Most Holy" which is found in the AV seven times between Chs. 40 and 48 also comes from the word *qodesh*. Both words are said by Strong to be derived from *qadash* meaning to be clean, ceremonially or morally. Hence they both relate to anyone or anything that has been declared to be holy or sanctified by Yahweh. Qodesh is found in the chapters in more general use than *miqdash*. It occurs six times as "Sanctuary" with special reference to the Inner Temple, twenty four times as "holy" (name, portion, things, chambers, place, oblation) and six times as "Most holy".

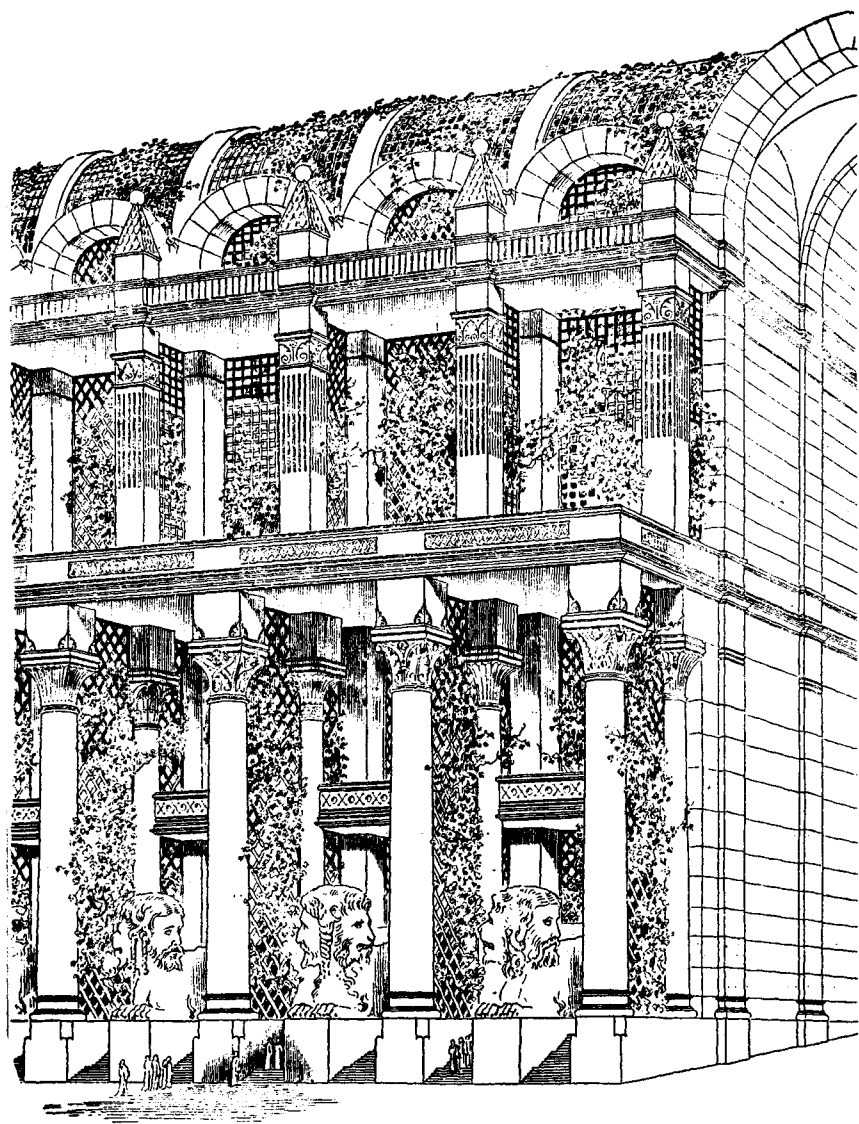
"Miqdash" relates especially to the structure, although once it is found as "holy place" in a passage better rendered "a sanctuary for the Sanctuary", with the Hebrew in both words being "miqdash" (Ch. 45:4).

A particularly intriguing feature of the inner Temple building is found in Ch. 41:18-20 — the reference to "Cherubim and palm trees".

It is obvious that palm trees as we know them are not intended. The Hebrew *timorah* is defined as "a palm-like pilaster (i.e. column)". The illustration shows the column between the Cherubic faces — of a man and a lion.

The Cherubim in Eden must have been Elohim (angels) — Genesis 3:24. Then there would be one face to each. Some think that the Cherubim of the Mosaic Tabernacle (Exod. 37:7-9) forming one piece of gold with the Mercy Seat, "with their faces one to another . . . to the mercy seatward"; and the Cherubim worked into the veil (Exod. 36:35); had four faces each, corresponding to the standards of the four leading tribes. This is an assumption, with no supporting evidence.

However, when we come to Ezekiel 1, we meet with definite statements, which have been considered earlier. The Cherubim here depicted had the faces of a man, a lion, an ox, an eagle, facing the four



points of the compass; and clearly identifying the Israelitish character of the Hope which has brought about the salvation of the Cherubic Saints. Similarly, in the vision of Glory seen by John (Rev. 4) there are twenty four elders (symbolising the priestly aspect of the redeemed, on the type of 1 Chron. 24) and four living creatures like a lion, a calf (= ox), a man, and a flying eagle (symbolising the political element, from the national encampment of Israel in the Wilderness wanderings).

In the spiritual aspect, the man represents humanity (the word for 'man' in Ch. 41:19 is 'adam'); the lion speaks of majesty and strength; the ox of humility and service; the eagle of inherent ability to soar to the heights. An illustration of this is found in the Gospel records —

Luke provides Messiah's genealogy from Adam — (the man)

Matthew provides the regal genealogy — "the son of David, the son of Abraham" — (the lion).

Mark has no genealogy — the mark of a servant — (the ox).

John has the Divine genealogy — "the Word became flesh" — (the eagle).

When Paul wrote to the Philippian ecclesia, did he have this application of the Cherubim to Jesus Christ in mind? It is an interesting thought, but whether it were so or not, the application is apt. In Ch. 2:5 he wrote: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus": v. 6. He was "in the form of God" — "form" is from *morphe*, which "denotes the spinal or characteristic form or feature of a person or thing", and it is used in the New Testament only in relation to Christ (Vine) = the eagle face.

v. 7 He 'made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form (*morphe*) of a servant'. ("reputation" is from *kenoo* = to become empty). Notwithstanding his high standing as the only begotten son of God (Heb. 2:5), he divested himself of all pretension of superiority, and acted the part of a servant to all = the ox face.

v. 8 "And being found in fashion as a man" ("fashion" is from *schema* = a figure — as a mode or circumstance; i.e. by implication the external condition — Strong) = the man face.

vv. 9-11 "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him . . . that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow . . . and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" — the lion face.

So it is established that the Cherubic faces related prophetically to Christ himself, and to the collective Christ-body in their spiritual and political aspects. (See earlier comments on this same thought).

But now, in Ezekiel 41:18-20, the ox and the eagle faces have been omitted from the description of the Temple structure, and only the symbology of the man and the lion remain depicted in Yahweh's House — Jesus Christ the perfect and glorified man; the lion of the tribe of Judah in his majestic and regal strength. No longer is he the "suffering servant;" no longer — in his immortality and glory — the "Word made flesh".

CHAPTER 40:47; CHAPTER 43:12-27; CHAPTER 47

The Most Holy (answering to the Most Holy of the “Mosaic” Tabernacle) is that area within the Temple Circular Range open to the sky. Here is the peak of Mt. Zion, with the Altar at its top. It is measured at 200 feet square for the whole altar area; the actual altar measuring one hundred and 144 feet square in the inner area whereon the sacrificial animals are placed.

The terminology used in Ch. 43:12-27 is not easy to follow. The following notes might help:

v. 12 *mountain* — *har* = a hill or mountain. No indication is given as to its height, but one thing seems certain — it will be much higher than the surrounding buildings, that the “ascending sacrifices” may be seen by the worshippers. And great significance is added to the Psalmist’s words: “Yet have I installed My king — on Zion My holy mountain” Psa. 2:6 (Rotherham).

“LORD, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart” Psa. 15:1-2.

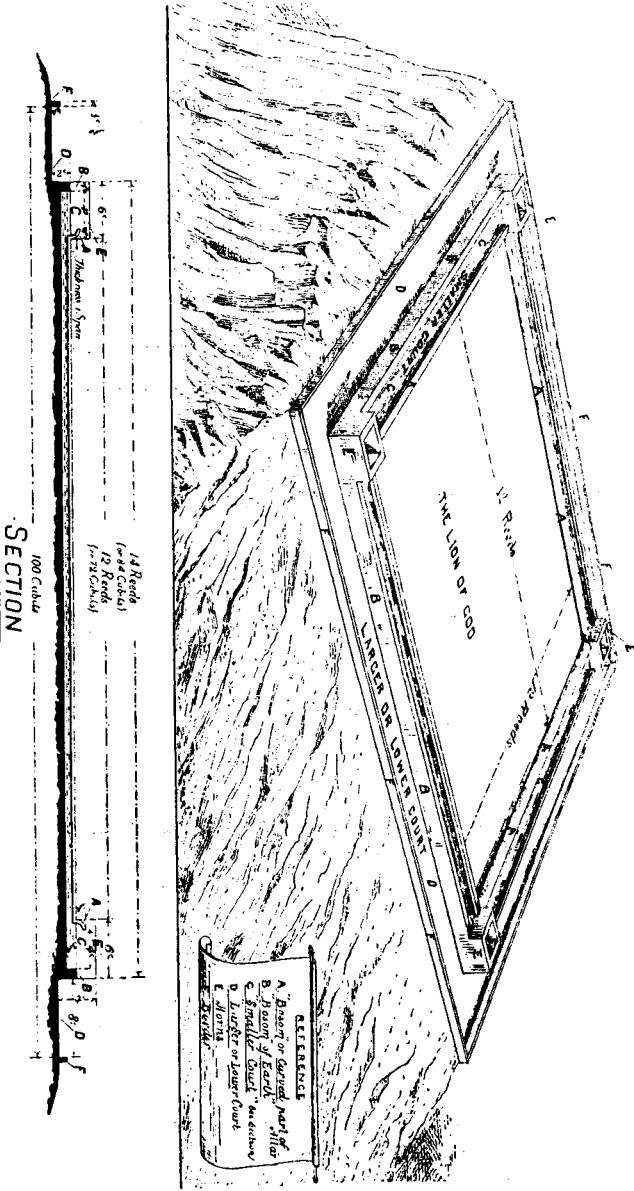
Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation” Psa. 24:3-5.

Most holy — *qodesh* (see earlier note).

v. 13 *Altar* — *mizbeach* = slaughter place; from *zabach* = to slaughter an animal. The word used through Ezekiel except in verses 15 and 16 of this chapter. In verse 15 (first occurrence) the word is *harel* = mountain or hill of God (see AV margin). It is measured at 4 cubits. The RV renders “upper altar”, and as no specific measurements are given for the altar-horns spoken of in the same verse, this is interpreted as representing the height of these horns (i.e. 8 feet). In the second occurrence of “altar” in this verse, and also in verse 16, the Hebrew is “Ariel”, which seems to mean “lion (ari) of God (El)”. (Again, see AV mg); but the RV renders “altar hearth of God”. The uncertainty is created by a slight difference in the pointing in the Hebrew (see *Theological Word Book of the Old Testament*). This is the altar-hearth, on which the sacrifices will be consumed. It is measured at 12 by 12 — omitting the italicised “cubits” it becomes twelve by twelve of the basic measuring reed, i.e. 144 feet by 144 feet.

In Isaiah 29 we find again the expression “Ariel”, and here again it is related to sacrifices —

“Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices” (verse 1). Here Jerusalem is declared to be “as Ariel”, a place of holocaust, of Yahweh’s judgment upon His people.



REFERENCES

A. Base of Curved part of
B. Base of Earth, part of
C. Smaller Court, see sketch
D. Larger or Lower Court
E. Stone
F. Stone

bottom — *cheq* = “to inclose; the bosom” (Strong). Rendered “bosom”, “hollow” in RV mgn. “A surrounding margin curved outwards and upwards from its inner edge. This margin is shown to stand up one cubit (two feet) and curves outward one cubit. Its thickness is a span, “or about nine British inches” (Henry Sulley). The edge of the Altar-hearth all round. The same word occurs in verses 14 and 17.

v. 14 The “*bottom upon the ground*” should be understood as the “bosom of earth” (RSV “base on the ground”).

lower (lesser) and greater settles — (ledge — RV mgn; RSV). Heb. *azarah* = an inclosure; a border (Strong). Again, interpretation is difficult. Henry Sulley found it necessary to make some assumptions based upon “appearances,” and he calculated the two ledges or courts as:

(1) Smaller Court — a trench or cavity, which will contain running water, flowing from beneath the Altar, cooling the Altar-hearth and then flowing down the Northern, Southern and possibly Western sides of the Mountain in the huge quantities required in Ch. 47.

2. Larger Court — a ledge some 16 feet wide running all round the Altar structure, itself surrounded by a “border” one half cubit thick (one foot) and one cubit (two feet) high (verse 17).

v. 17 — The whole “settle” or ledge comprising the Altar is now stated at 14 reeds square (again omitting the italicised “cubits” as in verse 16).

The sum of all the measurements in the cross-section is from outer edge to outer edge 100 cubits, or 200 feet, made up as follows:

2 Lower Courts (Ledges) — one each side	2 + 8 = 16 cubits;	32 feet
2 Outer Bosoms — one each side	2 + 1 = 2 cubits;	4 feet
2 Upper Courts (containing water) — one each side	2 + 4 = 8 cubits;	16 feet
2 Inner Bosoms (curved) — one each side	2 + 1 = 2 cubits;	4 feet
The Lion-hearth 12 reeds	= 72 cubits;	144 feet
	100 cubits;	200 feet

Now we face an intriguing question — the animal sacrifices are slain and washed in the Northern Range (Ch. 40:38-43); the animals are to be offered, and the blood sprinkled, upon the Altar situated on the top of a high mountain. How is this to be accomplished? Henry Sulley makes an interesting suggestion, which briefly is this —

In Ch. 41:22 in the description of the Temple (circular) Range, we read “The altar of wood was three cubits high, and the length thereof two cubits; and the corners thereof, and the length (Septuagint “base”) thereof, and the walls thereof were of wood: and he said unto me, This is the table that is before the LORD”. Now obviously a wooden altar could not be used for the offering of sacrifices on a continuing basis, and the Mountain Altar is for that purpose (Ch. 43:18) so it is suggested that this in fact is a moving table, conveying the sacrifices and the blood from the killing and washing tables to the point of ascension to the Mountain Altar. And then this verse 17 (Ch. 43) adds “his stairs shall look toward the East”. So a moving staircase is envisaged, from floor level to the top of the Mountain. The tremendous flow of water from the Mountain top may be used “to furnish the motive

power for actuating the conveyors suggested for the table of the Lord. Then passing on to each gate it may operate the lifts" (in the Temple and Outer Ranges). Flowing out from beneath the Gates the water forms the healing rivers Ezekiel later has drawn to his notice (Ch. 47). It is reasoned from the description given that the water flows down the Northern, Southern, and Western sides of the Mountain — the Northern and Southern streams flowing in an Easterly direction, while the Western stream divides with half flowing North and half flowing South to join the streams there. (But Zechariah adds a further dimension, which seems to indicate that the Western flow may pass through to the Mediterranean direct, and not join to the Northern and Southern streams — see Zech. 14:8).

Two amazing effects of this water are given:—

(1) v.7,12 — a tremendous growth of "trees for meat"; trees of a currently unknown genus, evergreens, bringing forth fruits throughout the year, and with medicinal leaves.

(2) vv. 8-10 — the Dead Sea shall be healed, and fish "exceeding many" shall be found therein, and in the rivers themselves.

A third thought develops — will worshippers be required to pass through these healing waters on their way into the Outer Ranges, as a form of baptism? It does seem a fitting suggestion.

The Psalmist's words may surely be viewed prophetically — "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the Tabernacle of the Most High" (Psa. 46:4). Then Joel and Zechariah foretell of the same — "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim" (North of Mt. Nebo, East of Jordan — Num. 25:1; Josh. 3:1; also apparently incorporating the barren valley of the Jordan itself, in the Dead Sea area) — Joel 3:18.

"And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem: half of them toward the former sea (Eastern — Dead Sea), and half of them toward the hinder sea (Mediterranean); in summer and in winter shall it be" Zech. 14:8.

And we must not fail to notice the spiritual application given us in Rev. 22:1-2 "He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree (*xulon* — wood) of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations". (The Greek word for healing is *therapeia*, from which comes our word "therapy"; it "primarily denotes care, attention, then medical service, healing" — (Vine); so surely it denotes the saving work of the saints in the Age to come).

CHAPTER 43:1-11

Between Chs. 8 and 11, Ezekiel witnessed the departure of Yahweh's Glory (Presence) from Jerusalem and thus from among His people. Now in vision, he sees it return, take possession of, and fill the House. It departed from the East gate; it returns now through the same gate of the much more glorious Temple. He tells us that it was the same "appearance" as that when he 'came to prophesy that the city would be destroyed' (v. 3 mg.). And the Divine promise is given (v. 5) — "the place of My throne, and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever" — *le olahm*, for the duration of the (Kingdom) age.

CHAPTER 44:1-3; CHAPTER 46:1-8

The House (as always in the past erections) will face East, and it is specified that the East Gate will be for the exclusive use of "the Prince". Despite much speculation, it is beyond doubt that this refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. The all-sufficient reason for this exclusive use is in Ch. 44:2 (note a better rendering by Rotherham — "doth enter" for "hath entered"). The gate will be opened only on Sabbath days, and "the day of the new moon," when the Prince will offer unto Yahweh "burnt offerings and peace offerings" — speaking of total service and complete fellowship to and with his Father; and "in the feasts and in the solemnities" (ch. 46:11-12).

CHAPTER 44:4-9; CHAPTER 44:10-31

Ezekiel is taken to the North Gate (the place of the killing of the sacrificial animals) and there made to understand that never again will Israel be permitted to defile Yahweh's Holy House. They had offered to Him polluted "bread, the fat and the blood", literally and in their hearts, both people and priests. But there was, and will be, a distinction between the unfaithful and the faithful priestly orders. This distinction is drawn on the basis of the dual priests of David's time, and their subsequent actions. Under David "Zadok and Abiathar were the priests" (2 Sam. 20:25). But when Adonijah made his move to claim the throne, Abiathar allied himself to him, while Zadok remained faithful to Yahweh's choice (1 Kings 1:7-8); Zadok subsequently anointing Solomon as king (vv. 37-38). Solomon later "thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the Lord" (Ch. 2:37), "and Zadok the priest did the king put in the room of Abiathar" (v. 35). Fittingly, Zadok means "righteous, justified, upright".

Of the Levites it is said that they will be "the keepers of the charge of the house" (Ch. 40:45); "ministers in My Sanctuary, having charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house; they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them" (Ch. 44:11). But "they shall not come near unto Me, to do the office of a priest unto Me, nor to come near to any of My holy things in the Most Holy" (Ch. 44:13).

It is evident that this is an order of mortal priests, ministering on behalf of those who come to worship in the Temple.

Ch. 44:17-31 delineates the regulations applying to the service of these mortal priests — their dress, their personal habits, their marriage restrictions. The principles prescribed are by no means inapplicable today to the “royal priesthood” who are called upon to “shew forth the virtues (AV mg.) of Him who hath called you” (1 Pet. 2:9).

So we read of

(1) the requirement of wearing, and maintaining in a clear state, the white robes of righteousness with which we were endowed at our baptism (Eph. 5:2-5; Rev. 3:4,18; 16:15; 19:8).

(2) Of personal appearance — the necessity to display an attitude of modesty, sobriety, moderation (1 Cor. 11; 1 Tim. 3:9-10).

(3) Of our personal habits, epitomised in the matter of drinking of wine to excess (Tit. 1:7; 2:3).

(4) Of marriage — always “in the Lord” (Eph. 5:31; 1 Corinthians 7)

(5) Of the settlement of disputes and of controversy — to be within the Body, never before those outside (1 Cor. 6:1-8).

(6) Defilement by association with the spiritually ‘dead’ (Luke 9:60; 2 Cor. 6:17).

Like the priests in the Mosaic economy. Yahweh is their “possession” (Ch. 44:28). To them belongs the foods of the meal, sin, trespass offerings; all dedicated (devoted) offerings; all the firstfruits offerings of the people.

Of the Zadok order, verses 15 and 16 and inserted as in a parenthesis — “But the priests the Levites the sons of Zadok — they shall come near unto Me to minister unto Me, and they shall stand before Me to offer unto Me the fat and the blood (“My bread” — v. 7). They shall enter into My Sanctuary, and they shall come near to My table (“keepers of the charge of the Altar” — Ch. 40:46), and they shall “keep My charge”. These are immortals.

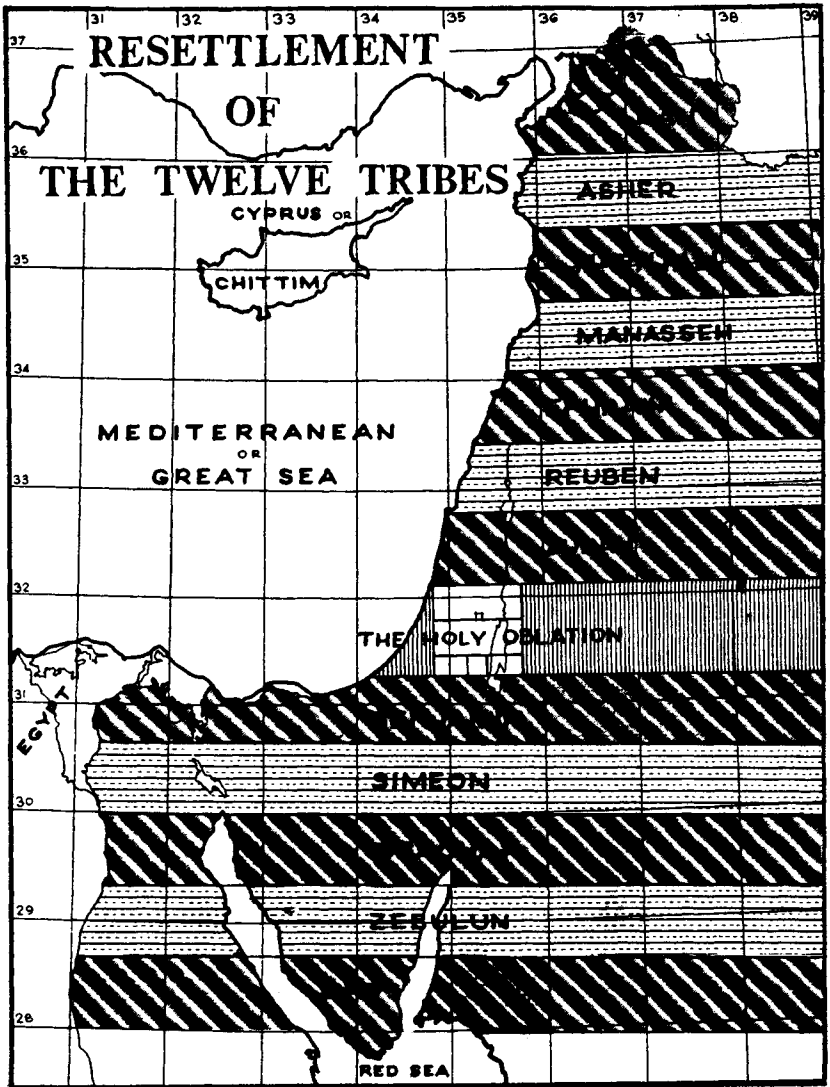
The area of operations of the mortal priests is restricted to the outside chambers of the Temple building — they will not be permitted to pass through into the Most Holy; the Altar area.

CHAPTER 45:1-8; CHAPTER 47:13-23; CHAPTER 48:1-29

Ch. 48 prescribes the division of the Land between Yahweh and the tribes of Israel.

There will be five tribes below “the Holy Oblation” —

Gad
Zebulun
Issachar
Simeon
Benjamin



and seven above it —

Judah
Reuben
Ephraim
Manasseh
Naphtali
Asher
Dan

The statement in Ch. 47:14 seems to indicate that each tribe shall be provided with an equal area — “Ye shall inherit it, one as well as another”. In a land fertile throughout, there will be no advantage of one against another. As it was in the past, “Joseph shall have two portions” — Ephraim and Manasseh — and Yahweh shall be Levi’s portion or inheritance.

This will be completely different from the division under Moses and Joshua.

In Ch. 48:20 we learn of an “Oblation” between the tribes of Benjamin on the South and Judah on the North, measuring 25,000 by 25,000 reeds (perhaps around 55 miles). This will be divided into three sections — two 25,000 wide West/East by 10,000 North/South, and one 25,000 West/East by 5,000 North/South.

Ch. 45:1-4 and Ch. 48:8-11 specify an area 25,000 by 10,000 reeds as an “Oblation offered unto Yahweh”. In it will be “the Sanctuary, the Holy of Holies” (Ch. 45:3 Rotherham). It will be given to the Zadok priesthood as Yahweh’s representatives “as a place for their houses, and an holy place for the Sanctuary” (Ch. 45:4).

Ch. 45:5 and Ch. 48:12-14 speak of an area also of 25,000 by 10,000 reeds to be given to the Levites “the ministers of the House . . . as a possession of cities to dwell in” (LXX, RV mgn, Roth, Comp. B mgn). It is part of Yahweh’s oblation, inalienable as to the land itself or its produce.

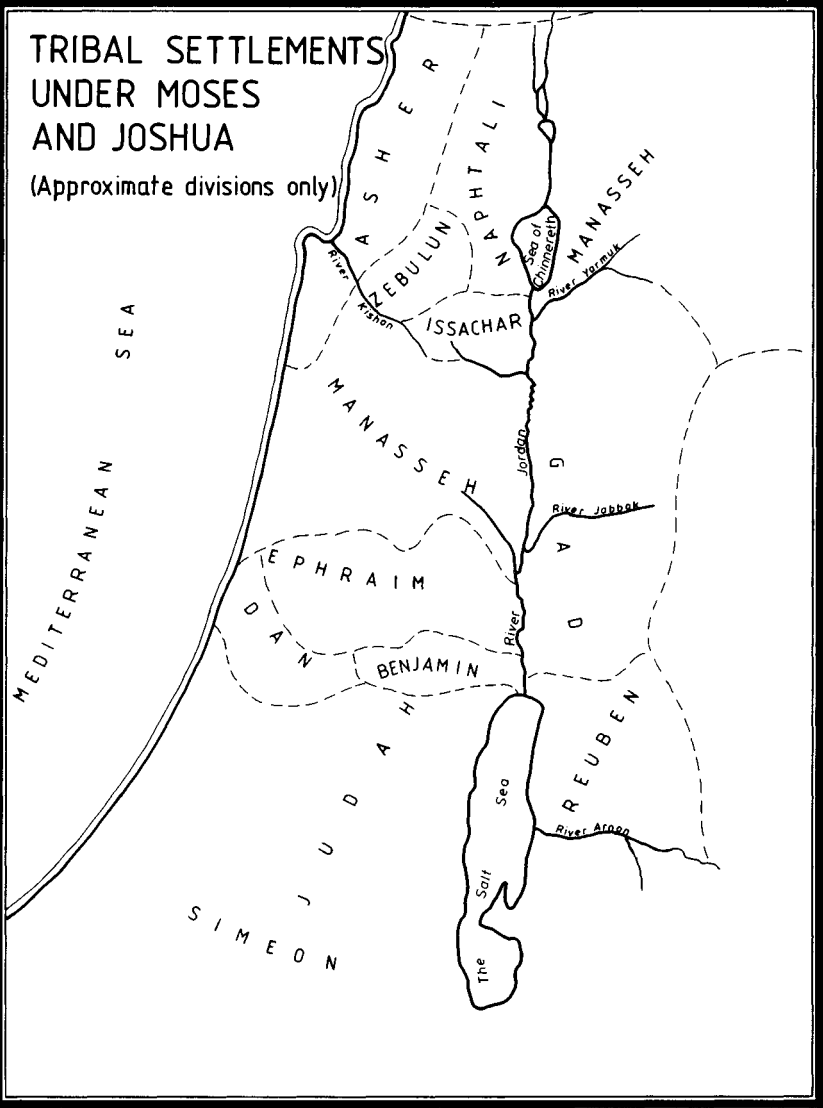
(There is a problem now with Chs. 45:1 and 48:9. In the AV they speak of an area 25,000 by 10,000 reeds which forms Yahweh’s Oblation, and which is then divided into two areas each 25,000 by 10,000 reeds. But the LXX renders 25,000 by 25,000 reeds which obviously is correct — see RV mgn, Roth, Comp B., mgn, RSV).

There remains 25,000 by 5,000 of the 25,000 by 20,000 reeds, which is allocated in Ch. 45:6 and 48:15-19 to “the whole house of Israel”; “and the city shall be in the midst thereof”. The “city” is that spoken of further in Ch. 48:30-35. 4,500 reeds square, i.e. 18,000 reeds in circumference (Ch. 48:16,35) that is about 10 miles square and over 40 miles in circumference.

Also provided is a “possession” for the Prince (Chs. 45:7; 48:21-22),

TRIBAL SETTLEMENTS UNDER MOSES AND JOSHUA

(Approximate divisions only)



in the Western and Eastern “residues” (see the illustration). Reference to this is found also in Ch. 46:16-18, where the obvious inference is that worthies such as Abraham, Moses, David, the Apostles, Paul, will be allocated by the Prince special honour and places of residence. So we read verse 16; but quite remarkably, there is provision made also in verse 17 for the Prince to grant a similar special honour to members of the mortal population; the vital difference between the two “gifts” being that this one returns to the Prince in the “year of liberty” (see Lev. 25:8-13).

CHAPTER 46:10-15; CHAPTER 45:9-25

There are other offerings spoken of:

Ch. 46:11 — “the solemn feasts and the solemnities”. Note the increased quantities required for the ancillary grain offering as compared with those previously required in Numbers 28 & 29.

Grain	Numbers	Ezekiel
Bullock	$\frac{1}{10}$ ths ephah	1 ephah
Ram	$\frac{2}{10}$ ths ephah	1 ephah
Lamb	$\frac{1}{10}$ ths ephah	“as he is disposed”

Similarly with the oil

Oil	Numbers	Ezekiel
Bullock	$\frac{1}{2}$ hin	1 hin
Ram	$\frac{1}{3}$ hin	1 hin
Lamb	$\frac{1}{4}$ hin	proportionate to the grain offering at 1 hin to an ephah.

This no doubt illustrates the increased fertility of the Land of Israel and all the world. Beside the Sabbath and New Moon offerings of verses 4 to 7 we learn now of

v. 12 Voluntary Burnt Offerings

Peace Offerings

v.13-15 Daily Burnt Offerings — but note there is no mention of an Evening offering.

Then we have read also of the Compulsory Burnt Offerings, Trespass Offerings and Sin Offerings (Ch. 40:39). Of the Annual Feasts under the Law, two are given special mention for the Kingdom Age:—

Ch. 45:21-24 — The Passover of Israel only — a feast of seven days from the 14th day of the 1st month.

v. 25 — The Feast of Tabernacles for Gentiles — also a feast of seven days from the 15th day of the 7th month. Zechariah speaks of this Feast (Ch. 14:16) — “Every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles”.

The provision of the sacrificial animals, grain, and oil will be the responsibility of “the people of the land, as an oblation for the prince in Israel” (Ch. 45:16).

The oblation will consist of:

v. 13 — “the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of wheat” (and likewise of barley) from each crop — an ephah to represent a tenth of an homer.

v. 14 — “the tenth part of a bath (of oil) from each cor (the cor, like the homer, contains ten baths)” — RSV.

v. 15 — one lamb out of two hundred in the flock — no doubt as an annual levy. Other animals are not specified here, but no doubt an appropriate regulation will be applied.

What these measurements represent in our codes of weights and liquids is extremely uncertain, and the following tables are not to be taken as in any way authoritative — they are taken as something of an average of the varying ideas promulgated:—

	Dry Measures	Liquid Measures
homer, or cor	10 bushels	600 pints
bath		60 pints
ephah	1 bushel	
hin		6 pints

(Verse 12 refers to monetary values — a shekel to equal twenty gerahs, and a maneh (mina) to equal sixty shekels, with the weight in silver denoting the value. A gerah is thought to be a grain of wheat. See Exodus 30:13).

From this oblation will be provided the offerings to be made by the Prince (v. 17). In the Passover and Tabernacles festivals these will consist of

(1) a bullock for a sin offering — on the first day

(2) seven bullocks and seven rams for a burnt offering, and a kid of the goats for a sin offering — on each of the seven days of the Feast with an appropriate meal and oil offering as in v. 24 — for each of the bullock and the ram, an ephah of meal, and a hin of oil.

Unleavened bread (speaking of sincerity and truth — 1 Cor. 5:8 — is to be eaten throughout each seven days (v. 21).

A significant omission relative to the ancillary grain and oil offerings relates to the “kid of the goats” offered as a sin offering in the Passover and Tabernacles festivals (Ch. 45:23,25). No doubt this is a reflection on the nature of the animal and its association with human nature — the goat is noted for its self-assertiveness and its intransigence; so it is a fitting symbol for the sinful nature of man and his reluctance to obey the dictates of his Master. The grain and oil associated with the other offerings speak of the fellowship with the Father that can be available where submission and service are found; but where rebellion and disobedience are, there can be no such fellowship.

Missing from the great annual festivals of the past are:

(1) The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)

(2) The Day of Atonement

and one is moved to ask, “Why should this be?” Perhaps the answer is in the antitypical fulfilment of that portrayed by those Festivals —

(1) On the morrow after the Sabbath following the fourteenth day of the first month was the waving of one sheaf of the firstfruit corn of the land — representing in type Jesus Christ, the firstfruits from the dead. Fifty days later was the waving of two wave-loaves — representing the accepted among Jews and Gentiles.

Now this has been accomplished in the glorification of Christ and all the saints.

(2) The offering of the Sin-Offering and the release of “*azazel*” (the scapegoat) represented the death and resurrection of Christ as the one who makes “an atonement for you to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD” (Lev. 16:30).

This too has been accomplished.

CHAPTER 45:18-20; CHAPTER 43:18-27

In Ch. 45:18-20 are regulated the procedures required —

(1) for the “cleansing of the Sanctuary” — on the first day of the first month. Why should this be necessary? Probably because having been erected by human labour from earthly materials there will be a need to sanctify and to dedicate it to Divine use.

(2) for the “reconciling” — *kophar* = covering — of the sins of those who err through ignorance. (“Simple” — *pethiy* = seducible, artless, undesigning). This on the first day (LXX) of the seventh month — the day of the blowing of trumpets under the Mosaic economy (Lev. 23:24).

We might compare Leviticus 16:16 —

“and he (the high priest) shall make an atonement (*kaphar* — covering over) for the holy place (*qodesh*) because of the uncleanness (*tumah* — ceremonial defilements) of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions (*pesha* — rebellions), and in all their sins (*chattath* — missing of the mark) and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that dwelleth (mgn) among them in the midst of their uncleanness”. The “cleansing” of the Altar is provided for in *Ch. 43:18-22*. It takes two days. The Zadok priests are to offer a young bullock for a sin offering the first day, and a kid of the goats the second day, also for a sin offering.

Then they are to “purge the altar and purify it,” and “consecrate themselves” over a period of seven days. This is regulated in *Ch. 43:23-27*.

A word study seems to be required here —

(1) It comes as a surprise at first to find that the Hebrew word for ‘cleanse’ in verses 20 and 22 is the principal word used in Scripture for ‘sin’ — i.e. *chata*, meaning “to miss the mark”. But we are told also that “by inference it means to expiate”, and “in the Piel form to expiate, atone for (of persons) and to cleanse, purify (of things)”. So a direct derivative “*chattath*” is found in Numbers 8:7 where it is rendered “purifying” (R.V. “expiation”) and in Num. 8:8,12; Ezek. 43:19,21,22,25 where it is rendered “sin offering”.

(2) “purge” in verses 20 and 26 is from “*kaphar*”, a word used exten-

sively to indicate covering from sight or memory; to conceal; to make reconciliation.

(3) In verse 23 “cleansing” is from *tohorah* meaning to ceremonially purify.

(4) “purify” in verse 26 is from *taher* meaning to make bright, pure, unadulterated.

(5) “consecrate” in verse 26 is from two words, *mala yad*, meaning “to fill the hand”.

So the initial “cleansing and purging” (ceremonial purification) occurs over two days with the Sin offerings of a young bullock on the first day and a kid of the goats in the second day. Then for seven days following there will be offered a bullock and a ram as a Burnt offering, and a goat as a Sin offering. This done, the altar shall be made ready for Divine use, and the Zadok priesthood will have “filled their hands” (been consecrated), and eligible henceforth to offer acceptably on behalf of all the people their vows of service (Burnt offerings) and their Thank offerings.

CHAPTER 48:30-35

With its Northern boundary just over twenty miles South of the South wall of the Temple, the new Jerusalem will be built — a city of some ten miles square, with three gates on each side, named after the tribes of Israel.

It is interesting to compare the list given here with the encampment described in Numbers 2, and with the order of birth —

Birth order	Meaning	Direction	Numbers 2	Ezekiel 48
Reuben	see a son	North	Dan	Reuben
Simeon	hearing		Asher	Judah
Levi	joined		Naphtali	Levi
Judah	praise	East	Judah	Joseph
Dan	judgment		Issachar	Benjamin
Naphtali	wrestling		Zebulun	Dan
Gad	company, troop	South	Reuben	Simeon
Asher	happy, blessed		Simeon	Issachar
Issachar	reward		Gad	Zebulun
Zebulun	dwelling	West	Ephraim	Gad
Joseph	adding; increase		Manasseh	Asher
Benjamin	son of the right hand		Benjamin	Naphtali
Manasseh	forgetting			
Ephraim	doubly fruitful			

As compared with Numbers, the list in Ezekiel, besides the positional changes, replaces Ephraim and Manasseh with Joseph and Levi, thus restoring the full list of Jacob’s sons. That much is readily understandable, but why there shall be a change so marked in the positions of the tribes is not revealed. It is a Divine arrangement, so there must be a valid reason, which no doubt will be revealed in due course.

Other listings of Jacob’s children will be found in Genesis 49

(Jacob's blessings), and Deuteronomy 33 (Moses' blessings). Each one is different.

The suggestion has been made that wherever a listing occurs, the interpretation of the names may be compounded into a sentence with significance. As far as the Ezekiel list is concerned, this presents no difficulty, especially bearing in mind that the time is the time of glory for Christ and his "children". Thus we may read:

See a son — praise (him, all ye who have been) *joined* (to him, as an) *increase* (to the) *son of the right hand* (of Yahweh) — (after the) *Judgment* — (when those who have *heard* — (him shall have a) *reward* — (and shall) *dwell* (with him, and the whole) *company* (shall be) *blessed* — (in him after the) *wrestling*.

One is reminded of the words of Isaiah 53:10-12 "when his soul shall make an offering (AV mg.) for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong".

And this city — known progressively in Scripture as Salem (peace); Jebus (threshing floor); and Jerusalem (city of peace) — will have a new name, Divinely prescribed —

Yahweh Shammah — "Yahweh from thence," or "Yahweh is there" (Ezekiel 48:35).

Then, as the multitudes of grateful worshippers from all over the fruitful earth bring their hearts and their offerings to His glorious "House of prayer for all nations", and sojourn in this city to await the call to journey on to the Temple itself, they — and all the world "shall know — that I am Yahweh", and His glory shall fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea.

