

Promise of Restoration

(10) Ezekiel 11

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6/6/2021

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Eze 11:1-4 – Prophecy against the princes

Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the East Gate of the Lord's house, which faces eastward; and there at the door of the gate were twenty-five men, among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azzur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people. And He said to me: "Son of man, these are the men who devise iniquity and give wicked counsel in this city, who say, 'The time is not near to build houses; this city is the caldron, and we are the meat.' Therefore prophecy against them, prophecy, O son of man!"

What does it mean, that "the Spirit lifted me up"?

This is the continuation of Ezekiel's vision that began in chapter 8. He physically remained in Babylon, but God gave him a vision of the spiritual corruption of Jerusalem and God's response to it, both of judgment and the departing of God's glory from the temple and the city.

Where was Ezekiel taken?

To the East Gate of the Lord's house: The last mention of this **East Gate** in Ezekiel's vision described how the visible representation of God's glory hovered there on its way away from the holy of holies (Ezekiel 10:19).

What did Ezekiel see?

There at the door of the gate were twenty-five men: A group of this many men were previously mentioned in Ezekiel 8:16, who stood with the backs to the temple and worshipped the sun as they faced the east gate.

- Now Ezekiel saw **Jaazaniah** and **Pelatiah** among them. The **Jaazaniah** named here seems to be different that the one mentioned in (Ezekiel 8:9-11), having a different father.

What did God say about the men Ezekiel saw?

These are the men who devise iniquity and give wicked counsel in this city: God meant this of the entire group of **twenty-five men**, with Jaazaniah and Pelatiah being notable among the group. These were the wicked leaders of a wicked city.

What was the counsel of the men?

The time is not near to build houses; this city is the caldron, and we are the meat: This is the content of their **wicked counsel**. The sense *seems* to be that they were defiantly confident that they would be safe in Jerusalem, despite what prophets such as Jeremiah (as in Jeremiah 29:5) and Ezekiel had told them.

- It seems better to regard **the time is not near to build houses** as a *question*, not a statement. *Isn't it time to build houses?*
- This was a statement of confidence that Jerusalem would be safe and delivered from the Babylonian threat. Just as pieces of meat are safe in a covered **caldron**, so they claimed to be safe.
- The city would be a shield about them as the caldron is to seething flesh. Thus they were scorning the message of God's prophet, and relying on a false confidence in Jerusalem and its power to withstand siege and ultimate exile.

What is the problem with the counsel of men?

Colossians 2:8 – *Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.*

Human reasoning always falls short when it does not comprehend the truth that God has revealed.

What human counsel is misleading people today?

- World government is necessary to deal with all the world problems
- Religion is the opiate of the masses
- To correct America's systematic racism, the implementation of socialism is necessary
- People are the product of random natural processes (evolution)
- There are many ways to God

Eze 11:5-10 – God’s dealing with Israel will not end

Then the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and said to me, “Speak! ‘Thus says the Lord: “Thus you have said, O house of Israel; for I know the things that come into your mind. You have multiplied your slain in this city, and you have filled its streets with the slain.” Therefore thus says the Lord God: “Your slain whom you have laid in its midst, they are the meat, and this city is the caldron; but I shall bring you out of the midst of it. You have feared the sword; and I will bring a sword upon you,” says the Lord God. “And I will bring you out of its midst, and deliver you into the hands of strangers, and execute judgments on you. You shall fall by the sword. I will judge you at the border of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.

What did God have against the leaders of Israel?

- *For I know the things that come into your mind:* God knew not only the actions, but also the *thinking* of the leaders and people of Jerusalem.
- *You have multiplied your slain in this city:* God reminded the leaders and the people of their responsibility in the great judgment coming upon them. God’s judgment was the response to their persistent, deep rebellion.

How did God (and Ezekiel) use the words of the wicked against them?

They are the meat, and this city is the caldron: Ezekiel turned their defiant claim of confidence into a predication of doom. They wouldn’t be *protected* in the **caldron**, they would be cooked – and then devoured!

- Their own words, spoken in mockery, are wittily retorted upon them.

What was the good news for Israel?

But I shall bring you out of the midst of it: God promised that though the devastation to come upon Jerusalem would be terrible, it would not be the *last* word. The story of Israel and Jerusalem would not end with the Babylonian conquest.

- *I will bring you out of its midst, and deliver you into the hands of strangers:* Not everyone would perish in Jerusalem. God would send many into exile. When Jerusalem was destroyed the judgments upon them would not end; God would continue to deal with His people **at the border of Israel** and beyond.

Eze 11:11-13 – God’s judgment beyond Jerusalem

This city shall not be your caldron, nor shall you be the meat in its midst. I will judge you at the border of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord; for you have not walked in My statutes nor executed My judgments, but have done according to the customs of the Gentiles which are all around you. Now it happened, while I was prophesying, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then I fell on my face and cried with a loud voice, and said, “Ah, Lord God! Will You make a complete end of the remnant of Israel?”

This city shall not be your caldron, nor shall you be the meat in its midst: Ezekiel quoted their defiant claim to them one last time. Jerusalem would be no protection for them at all.

And you shall know that I am the Lord: God’s dealing with His people *after* the fall of Jerusalem would be another way He revealed Himself to His people. He would not give up on them, either ending His discipline or His promises.

Why was exile appropriate for Israel?

Have done according to the customs of the Gentiles which are all around you: Since Israel imitated the idolatry and wickedness of the surrounding pagan nations, it was appropriate for God to exile them among those nations.

What do we know about Pelatiah?

Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died: In Ezekiel’s vision, he saw one of the leaders of Jerusalem (mentioned earlier in the chapter) die, no doubt under the promised judgments of God.

- Pelatiah may have been the leader of those who scoffed at God’s word (vv. 1-3). His death was a foretaste of what awaited the rest whom Ezekiel had warned.
- The name **Pelatiah** means *Yahweh preserves a remnant*.

What was Ezekiel concerned about?

Will You make a complete end of the remnant of Israel? Ezekiel asked God the same question he asked earlier in the vision (Ezekiel 9:8). Stunned by the depth and the breadth of God’s judgments, he wondered if *any* would remain.

What concerns do Christians have today?

The loss of our freedoms we enjoy in the USA; and along with that, persecution.

- The good news that God often uses times of persecution to spark revivals.

Eze 11:14-16 – God’s promise to sustain His people

Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Son of man, your brethren, your relatives, your countrymen, and all the house of Israel in its entirety, are those about whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, ‘Get far away from the Lord; this land has been given to us as a possession.’ Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Although I have cast them far off among the Gentiles, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet I shall be a little sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone.””

What did the people of Jerusalem think of the exiles?

Get far away from the Lord; this land has been given to us as a possession: This seems to be the cry of those who ignored the warning of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, telling those who believed Jerusalem would be conquered to leave, because they would occupy the land without them.

Who was better off, those in exile or those in Jerusalem?

Although I have cast them far off among the Gentiles: We know from Jeremiah (Jeremiah 24:1-7) that Jews who remained in Jerusalem and who had not yet been carried off to exile considered themselves superior to those who had been taken. Here God spoke well of those already exiled, saying though He had **cast them far off** He had not forsaken them.

What was the hope for the people in exile?

Yet I shall be a little sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone: God promised to sustain His people in exile. One of the reasons the leaders and people clung to the hope of possessing the land even in opposition to God was because they could not understand that God could be with them in exile. They thought opposing God was their best chance for survival as a people, but the opposite was true.

What new concept was represented by the idea that God would be with the exiles?

The sanctuary was normally conceived of as a cult site or building rendered sacred by the presence of the deity. Here Yahweh promises to be for the exiles what the temple has heretofore been for them in Jerusalem.

How does the idea that God would be with the remnant foreshadow a Church Age understanding?

1 Corinthians 6:19 – *Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you*
God is omnipresent and is not limited to human-made structures. As Paul shared in Athens...

Acts 17:24 – *God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.*

What is the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives today?

“convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment” (John 16:7-11).

Everyone has a “God consciousness,” the Spirit applies the truths of God to minds of men to convince them by fair and sufficient arguments that they need a Savior.

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever” (John 14:16)

- Jesus said He would send the Spirit to us to be our Helper, Comforter, and Guide. The Greek word translated here “Counselor” means “one who is called alongside” and has the idea of someone who encourages and exhorts.
- Jesus gave the Spirit as a “compensation” for His absence, to perform the functions toward us which He would have done if He had remained personally with us.

“when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13)

Among those functions is that of revealer of truth. The Spirit’s presence within us enables us to understand and interpret God’s Word.

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.”
(1 Corinthians 12:4)

Another one of the Holy Spirit’s roles is that of gift-giver.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)

The Spirit also functions as fruit-producer in our lives. These are not works of our flesh, which is incapable of producing such fruit, but they are products of the Spirit’s presence in our lives.

Why is the sanctuary of God for the exiles described as a “little sanctuary”?

The sense of **little** is not *small*, but *of short season*. “It is not a ‘little sanctuary’ (v. 16, AV, which could never be true of God), but ‘for a little while’ (ASV).

Eze 11:17-21 – God’s promise to restore Israel

Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.”’ And they will go there, and they will take away all its detestable things and all its abominations from there. Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God. But as for those whose hearts follow the desire for their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their deeds on their own heads,” says the Lord God.

Thus says the Lord God: The declared message from Adonai Yahweh is commonly used in Ezekiel (more than 200 times). It gives special attention Yahweh’s status as master and lord over His covenant people.

What would God do for Israel?

I will gather you from the peoples: God first promised to sustain His people in exile (Ezekiel 11:14-16). Now He promised to **gather** and **assemble** them from their places of exile and to **give you the land of Israel**. Judgment was assured, but so was restoration.

I will give you the land of Israel is a remarkable promise to make to *post-exilic* Israel. When did God reverse His land grant?

How would Israel respond to being restored to the land by God?

They will take away all its detestable things and all its abominations: God promised that Israel’s time of exile would be a *cleansing* time, a time to **take away** their previous devotion to idols. This was fulfilled in history; the people of Israel did not have the same problem with the idols of the nations *after* the exile as they did before.

How else would God restore Israel?

Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them: As God promised His work of restoration, He began to speak in terms associated with His greater work of restoration in the new covenant...

Jeremiah 31:31-34 – *Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel... I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will*

forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.

These promises are later repeated by Ezekiel and spoken of specifically as a *covenant* (Ezekiel 37:21-28).

When would this new covenant with Israel be realized?

When God starts working through Israel again during the Tribulation...

Romans 11:25-26 – *blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved*

What can we learn about this new covenant for Israel from here in Ezekiel 11?

- Israel gathered together again (**one heart**)
- Spiritual transformation (**a new spirit...and give them a heart of flesh**)
- The law written on the heart (**that they may walk in My statutes**)
- Special relationship with God (**they shall be My people, and I will be their God**)

What other covenants had God made to Israel?

- The Abrahamic Covenant promised to Abraham and His covenant descendants a *land*, a *nation*, and a *blessing* to extend to all nations (Genesis 12:1-3)
- The Mosaic or Sinai Covenant gave Israel the *law*, the *sacrifices*, and the *choice* of blessing or curse (Exodus 19)
- The Davidic Covenant that promised an *everlasting dynasty*, a *perfect ruler*, and the *Promised Messiah* (2 Samuel 7)

How is the New Covenant superior to all other covenants?

God’s plan of redemption through the covenants is completed and perfected in the New Covenant. Over the span of Old Testament passages that announce the new covenant (especially Ezekiel 11:16-20, 36:16-28, and 37:21-28), we see the promises of gathered Israel [**one heart**], of cleansing and spiritual transformation [**new spirit...heart of flesh**], of new and real relationship with God [**they shall be My people, and I will be their God**] and the reign of the Messiah during the Millennial Kingdom.

What does it mean that God “will recompense their deeds on their own heads”?

The promise of coming restoration (especially as seen in the new covenant) is not the message of universalism, saying that all will be restored, even if they persist in their rejection of God. For those who **follow the desire for their detestable things and their abominations**, they will be judged for their sins.

Eze 11:22-25 – The glory of the Lord departs

So the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel was high above them. And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain, which is on the east side of the city. Then the Spirit took me up and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to those in captivity. And the vision that I had seen went up from me. So I spoke to those in captivity of all the things the Lord had shown me.

What did Ezekiel see at the end of his vision?

So the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them: As seen in the previous chapter, the cloud of God’s glory was being carried by or with God’s chariot throne, attended by the **cherubim**. As the **cherubim** moved, so did the **glory of the God of Israel**.

Where did the glory of the Lord go after it left Jerusalem?

The glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain: After progressing from the holy of holies to the threshold of the temple, to the east gate, the **glory of the Lord** then *left* the temple and even the city of Jerusalem, pausing then at the Mount of Olives **on the east side of the city**. We can imagine this as a pause to regret and sorrow over the departure, even as Jesus later looked over Jerusalem with regret and sorrow.

How did Ezekiel’s vision end?

Then the Spirit took me up and brought me in a vision: In his vision, Ezekiel returned to **Chaldea** (Babylon), and then the vision ended.

What did Ezekiel do about his vision?

So I spoke to those in captivity all the things the Lord had shown me: Ezekiel wasn’t given this message for his own amazement, but to instruct and warn the people and elders of Israel. They were perhaps shocked at the depths of Jerusalem’s depravity, the severity of the coming judgment, and the promised departure of God’s glory.

What applications for today do we see in this passage of Ezekiel?

- Be aware of the deceptive philosophies of men that lack comprehension of God.
- We are blessed to live in this Age of Grace with the New Covenant already applied to the church.
- God will restore Israel... we can already see the leaves on the fig tree.