

Ezekiel 11:14-25—The Regathering Of Israel And The New Covenant

Memory Verse

Ezekiel 36:26-27 NKJV

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Revision: Ichabod—The glory has departed from Israel

Last week we saw God's Shekinah glory (His physical or visible presence) leave the temple because of Israel's persistent sin. God gives us His blessings, but will also take them away if we abuse them by turning them into an idol; remember that an idol is, by definition, "anything that becomes more important than God in our lives." For Israel, the temple had become more important than the God who dwelt in the temple—so much so that they continued to worship and offer sacrifices at the temple, basically in honour of the temple, but with no thought to pleasing God. It was all about ritual and routine, and, for the majority of the people, their relationship with God was completely missing. Their trust was in the temple building itself—in their mind it was indestructible because it had been given to them by God.

This is reminiscent of another time in Israel's history when they also substituted an object for a relationship with God. Back in the days of king Saul, before there was a temple, the Israelites trusted in the Ark of the Covenant. They, like the Israelites in Ezekiel's day, treated the Ark of the Covenant like a lucky charm. They thought that, as long as they had their lucky charm, then they would be okay if they lived for themselves—after all, they had their benevolent genie (God) whose presence dwelt between the golden cherubim (angels) that were a part of the mercy seat, the lid that covered the Ark of the Covenant. All they had to do was rub the genie... sorry, I mean pray with the Ark of the Covenant present! Surely God would not allow His precious box containing the two stone tablets with the 10 commandments written on them to fall into enemy hands! Let's see how the situation played out. It will give us a lot of insight into the thinking of the people of Ezekiel's day that we are currently learning about.

1 Samuel 4:1-22 NKJV

Now Israel went out to battle against the Philistines, and encamped beside Ebenezer; and the Philistines encamped in Aphek. ² Then the Philistines put themselves in battle array against Israel. And when they joined battle, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men of the army in the field. ³ And when the people had come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the Lord defeated us today before the Philistines? **Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord [the covenant that they had broken] from Shiloh to us, that when it comes among us it may save us from the hand of our enemies.**" ⁴ So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from there the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, who dwells between the cherubim. **And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas [corrupt priests], were there with the ark of the covenant of God.**

⁵ **And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted so loudly that the earth shook [see how much faith they had in this box].**

⁶ Now when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, "What does the sound of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews mean?" Then they understood that the ark of the Lord had come into the camp. ⁷ **So the Philistines were afraid, for they said, "God has come into the camp!" And they said, "Woe to us! For such a**

thing has never happened before. ⁸ Woe to us! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods [again, the misconception that the Ark is God]? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. ⁹ Be strong and conduct yourselves like men, you Philistines, that you do not become servants of the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Conduct yourselves like men, and fight!”

¹⁰ So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and every man fled to his tent. There was a very great slaughter, and there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers.

¹¹ **Also the ark of God was captured;** and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

¹² Then a man of Benjamin ran from the battle line the same day, and came to Shiloh with his clothes torn and dirt on his head. ¹³ Now when he came, there was Eli, sitting on a seat by the wayside watching, **for his heart trembled for the ark of God.** And when the man came into the city and told it, all the city cried out. ¹⁴ When Eli heard the noise of the outcry, he said, “What does the sound of this tumult mean?” And the man came quickly and told Eli. ¹⁵ Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were so dim that he could not see.

¹⁶ Then the man said to Eli, “I am he who came from the battle. And I fled today from the battle line.”

And he said, “What happened, my son?”

¹⁷ So the messenger answered and said, “Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has been a great slaughter among the people. Also your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead; **and the ark of God has been captured.**”

¹⁸ **Then it happened, when he made mention of the ark of God,** that Eli fell off the seat backward by the side of the gate; and his neck was broken and he died, for the man was old and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

¹⁹ Now his daughter-in-law, Phinehas’ wife, was with child, due to be delivered; **and when she heard the news that the ark of God was captured,** and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and gave birth, for her labor pains came upon her. ²⁰ And about the time of her death the women who stood by her said to her, “Do not fear, for you have borne a son.” But she did not answer, nor did she regard it. ²¹ Then she named the child **Ichabod, saying, “The glory has departed from Israel!”** because the ark of God had been captured and because of her father-in-law and her husband. ²² And she said, **“The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured.”**

Ichabod—no glory and no hope. Eli trembled for the Ark of the Covenant, but he didn’t tremble for God’s honour and the people’s failing relationship with God because of his corrupt sons! I would ask, if Eli really loved God, then why wasn’t he concerned when he knew that his sons were turning the people were turning away from God? Why? Because he mistook the outward form of religion for the real thing. He was willing to enjoy and find his security and satisfaction in the blessings God gave without submitting to, and trusting in, the One who actually gave the gift.

Application: Today we can rely on or put our trust in a friendship, our family, a preacher, a church, an organisation, money and possessions, career etc. But learn the lesson that the Israelites teach us here—anything that we put our faith in, aside from God, will eventually let us down. While it’s right to appreciate and be thankful for what God has given us, it is a serious mistake to begin to put our trust in that thing, organisation, or person. Why? Truly, when, not if, but when they fall or fail, we will be absolutely devastated—our whole world will have fallen down around us. We will be left with no hope and no glory. We’ll then have to humble ourselves, repent, and do what God wanted us to do in the first place—trust Him! “Then you will know that I am the Lord”—this has been God’s plan for Israel the whole time.

The Regathering Of Israel And The New Covenant (11:14-24)

Ezekiel 11:14-24 NKJV

¹⁴ Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ¹⁵ “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.’ ¹⁶ 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.” ’ ¹⁷ 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.” ’ ¹⁸ And they will go there, and they will take away all its detestable things and all its abominations from there. ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ 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. ²¹ 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.

²² So the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel was high above them. ²³ 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.

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ So I spoke to those in captivity of all the things the Lord had shown me.

1. The unrepentant Jews still in Jerusalem think that they are the only ones accepted by God because they are still in Jerusalem where the temple of God is

Ezekiel 11:14-15 NKJV

Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ¹⁵ “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.’

v ¹⁵ **Get far away from the Lord; this land has been given to us as a possession:** Do you remember the competition between the true and false prophets for the hearts of the people? The true prophets (Ezekiel in Babylon and Jeremiah in Jerusalem) were faithful to share God’s message—repent or face judgement. God had told them through the prophet Jeremiah that He had taken the good figs, representing the righteous people (e.g. Daniel and his friends), out of Jerusalem for their own protection and good, and had left the bad figs, representing the unrepentant people, in Jerusalem to be judged by the Babylonians (see Jeremiah 24). Ezekiel had echoed the same message with his dramatisation of the siege and defeat of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.

However, the false prophets, the ones who didn’t want to offend the people, the ones who were more concerned with their own reputation and how many likes they had on facebook, told the people what they wanted to hear—“yes, God loves you, there’s going to be a revival, God’s going to protect us, and the best thing is, you don’t even have to change the way you are living. Think about it, how could a loving God judge people for their sin? And, we have the temple... everything’s going to be just fine!”

These false prophets and false teachers encouraged rebellion against God by telling the people to ignore the warnings of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. They taught that people who remained in Jerusalem were better (more spiritual or closer to God) than the ones who had been taken captive, and so God would keep them safe and they would possess the land (“the land has been given to us as a possession”—v15). Therefore, they were telling those who believed Ezekiel’s and Jeremiah’s message (that Jerusalem would be conquered) to leave—“get far away from the Lord”. Again, this was the opposite message to Jeremiah, who said that if you want to live, leave the city and surrender to the Babylonians (see Jeremiah 38:2), because those who remained would face judgement. This was truly a life and death decision for the people to make—which prophets would they listen to, true or false?

“These are the words of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, against those of Israel who had been carried away to Babylon with Jeconiah. *Go ye far from the Lord*: but as for us, the land of Israel is given to us for a possession, we shall never be removed from it, and *they [the people already taken captive]* shall never return to it.” (Clarke)

Application: Appearances can be deceiving: There are many people today following the same kind of logic. Today it is popularly known as the prosperity gospel. They believe that if you are safe, healthy, and well off, then that is evidence of God’s blessing on you, and acceptance of you. It’s the same lie Job’s friends kept of shoving down his throat—if you really are in right standing with God (with no unconfessed or hidden sin), then God wouldn’t be letting bad things happen to you—therefore, you must have sinned (if you only had more faith). This false gospel is encapsulated so well in:

Revelation 3:17-19 NKJV

Because you say, **‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’**—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. ¹⁹ ***As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.***

Many churches today are Laodicean, boldly teaching this lie, this false gospel, the property gospel—the “come to Jesus so you will be blessed” gospel. And like it was in Ezekiel’s day, so it is today—it’s a matter of life and death. Why? Those who follow the false teachers will end up condemned because they never repented of their sins. Jesus said that there would be many false converts. Notice how well Jesus’ warning fits with the popular message of many of today’s modern churches:

Matthew 7:21-23 NKJV

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² **Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’** ²³ And then I will declare to them, **‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness [meaning there was never true repentance]!’**

If you still need to be convinced that material blessing is not necessarily a definite proof of God’s favour, read psalm 73 and you will find that, in contrast to the life of the wicked, the life of the righteous is often characterised by discipline and chastening, as God is faithful to complete His work of sanctification in us described so well in 2 Corinthians 3:18—“*But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord*”.

Also consider the following verses. Recognise that for the true believer, there will eventually come persecution as we take a stand for the truth and go against our ungodly culture.

2 Timothy 3:10-12 NKJV

But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, ¹¹ persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. ¹² **Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.**

James 4:4 NLT paraphrase

You adulterers! **Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God?** I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God.

John 15:18-20 NLT paraphrase

"If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. ¹⁹ **The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you.** ²⁰ Do you remember what I told you? 'A slave is not greater than the master.' Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you.

If we are going to be honest with a potential convert to Christianity, as we certainly should, then we must warn them that life will get harder in many ways. They need to know that they will have to say no to many things that the world considers normal and good; they will face ridicule, persecution, rejection, and opposition—but it will all be worth it in the end.

Romans 8:18 NLT paraphrase

Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later.

As Jesus says, before we make the choice to repent and follow Him, we must first sit down and count the cost of being His disciple. It will, after all, require us to be willing to forsake all (see Luke 14:25-33). Simply put, we make following Jesus (loving and obeying Him) our number one priority—this is what it means to confess Jesus as our *Lord* and Saviour.

2. God keeps His promise to never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5) meeting our greatest need—Himself (v 16)

Ezekiel 11:16 NKJV

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." '

Now we come to the opposite of the lies/false teaching the unrepentant Jews still living in Jerusalem believed—we now get to see the reality or truth of the matter. God is actually saying here that those who were taken captive by the Babylonians in the first two captivities were actually those who had found favour with Him! By His Shekinah glory departing from the temple, God had deserted the proud, rebellious, religious hypocrites in Jerusalem, but had made His presence available to the captives who were scattered among the nations in a much more personal and glorious way.

v 16 **Yet I shall be a little sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone:**

Application: *The evidence of God's grace or favour is that His presence would be with them wherever they went, not their external circumstances.* As long as we choose to draw near to God, He will draw near to us (James 4:8)—it's a promise that applies to any location or circumstance, good or bad. Think of the disciples struggling in the boat in the storm as their boat was filling with water.

Matthew 8:18-27 NLT paraphrase

When Jesus saw the crowd around Him, **He instructed his disciples to cross to the other side of the lake.**

²³ Then Jesus got into the boat and started across the lake with His disciples.

²⁴ Suddenly, a fierce storm struck the lake, with waves breaking into the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. ²⁵ The disciples went and woke him up, shouting, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!"

²⁶ Jesus responded, "**Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!**" Then He got up and rebuked the wind and waves, and suddenly there was a great calm.

²⁷ The disciples were amazed. "Who is this Man?" they asked. "Even the winds and waves obey Him!"

How would you be? You obey Jesus and as a result it seems like you almost lose your life in a storm. But remember Jesus' command, "**He instructed his disciples to cross to the other side of the lake.**" Actually, the disciples could not have been safer, despite the appearances to the contrary. God will use circumstances for His glory and for our growth and sanctification.

Remember from last week that God has already removed His presence or favour from the temple in Jerusalem. However, the Jews still living there thought that everything was all okay because the temple was there, but they didn't realise that God's presence had departed from the temple—their's was an empty hope, like a thirsty man in a desert seeing a mirage on a hot day. I'd rather be tossed around in a boat with Jesus on board than have a great trip without Him—because I know that only one boat will reach the correct destination—the one with Jesus on board! The prosperity gospel and traditional ritualistic religion promises a smooth ride, but you'll be quite disappointed with your actual destination when you get there—Hell. The *gospel of grace* promises a rough ride, but also guarantees that you will reach your destination—Heaven.

v 16 **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."':** "We know from Jeremiah (Jeremiah 24:1–7, the parable of the good and bad figs) 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." (David Guzik)

v 16 **Yet I shall be a little sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone:** Here we see God promising to sustain His people while they were in exile—the Babylonian invasion would not be the end of Israel as it had been for several other nations. Up to now the tone of Ezekiel's prophecies have been dark with the judgement of sin, but now we see the sun shining through the clouds. God gives the exiles a hope beyond their wildest dreams. Consider the following quotes:

“For the period of their absence from their land and the earthly temple, He would be their Sanctuary.” (Morgan)

“This statement is without parallel in the Old Testament. 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.” (Block)

“Away from the outward ordinances and the material edifice, the exiles would find more than the equivalent in God Himself. He would give them the reality, of which there had been the outward and visible emblems.” (Meyer)

“The exiles would find more than the equivalent in God Himself.” Yes the Shekinah glory had departed from the temple, but God had given them something so much better—a guarantee of His presence to each individual *wherever they were*. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, Jews who were taken captive in the first deportation in 605BC, demonstrate just how precious or awesome the promise was that God would be a little sanctuary or holy place for the captives while in exile; God would never leave them nor forsake them—wherever they went, He would be also. Of course this applies to believers today as well (see Hebrews 13:5). Remember that the context here is that these three men refused to compromise with the world, they refused to bow down and worship the golden statue that Nebuchadnezzar had made.

Daniel 3:22-30 NKJV

Therefore, because the king’s command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. ²³ And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, **fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.**

²⁴ Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counsellors, “Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?”

They answered and said to the king, “True, O king.”

²⁵ “Look!” he answered, **“I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.”**

²⁶ Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here.” Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. ²⁷ And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king’s counsellors gathered together, **and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power**; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.

²⁸ Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, **who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!** ²⁹ Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this.”

³⁰ Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon.

It’s a bit like the disciples being in the storm with Jesus on board—it’s a life threatening situation, but until our work on earth is finished, we are indestructible.

3. God's promise to restore Israel to the land and renew them spiritually (17–21)

Ezekiel 11:17-21 NKJV

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." ' 18 And they will go there, and they will take away all its detestable things and all its abominations from there. 19 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, 20 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. 21 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.

v 17 **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." (David Guzik)

v 17 **I will gather you from the peoples:** The first promise that we just learned about was God being a **little sanctuary** for the Jews while in exile. This second promise is that God will again give them **the land of Israel**—God promised to bring them back into the Land after 70 years had passed (Jeremiah 29:10). Remember that God shows mercy in judgement; this promise was not deserved.

Application: Who does the land of Israel belong to—The Jews or the Arabs?

v 17 **I will give you the land of Israel:** This is a promise that was given to Israel after they had gone into exile. "The gathering is to be by divine direction and from all lands and countries of their dispersion. And the promise is unequivocal: 'I will give you the land of Israel' (v. 17). Is it not pointless then to speak now as though the land of promise may belong to the Arabs or Israel? When did God reverse His land grant?" (Feinberg)

v 18 **They will take away all its detestable things and all its abominations:** Here is the prediction and promise that both the people of Israel and the land of Israel would be clear of idols. The time of exile would have a cleansing effect on the people—this is the purpose of God's discipline, to cleanse us and make us partakers of His holiness (Hebrews 12:10). Again, history shows that this is exactly what happened. Israel never had a problem with worshipping idols ever again.

v 19-20 **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, 20 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:** "In wrath remember mercy". How precious are these completely underserved, gracious, promises. Instead of the nation of Israel being wiped out (as they deserved), God instead lays out or reveals or promises a glorious and eternal future for the nation of Israel. "As God gives promises concerning the restoration of the nation of Israel, He begins to describe the greater work of restoration that is a part of the New Covenant (see Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Ezekiel 37:21-28)." (David Guzik)

In Ezekiel 11:19-20 we see four features of the New Covenant:

1. **Then I will give them one heart:** Israel gathered together again (unified kingdom)
2. **I will put a new spirit within them... and give them a heart of flesh:** Spiritual transformation
3. **That they may walk in My statutes:** The law written on the heart
4. **They shall be My people, and I will be their God:** Israel's Special relationship with God

A review of the covenants

God in His word has revealed His plan of redemption through a series of covenants:

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)

The New Covenant: “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*.” (David Guzik)

v 19 **One heart:** The promise of **one heart** may speak of a singularly devoted heart, or of a unified, gathered Israel. “If mt is followed, with evv, the gift is of *one heart*, implying the reunion of the old northern and southern kingdoms, as in 37:15–22.” (Taylor)

v 21 **I 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. (David Guzik)

4. The departure of the glory of the Lord (v 22–23)

Ezekiel 11:22-23 NKJV

So the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel was high above them. ²³ 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.

As we learned last week, one of the main themes of Ezekiel’s second main prophecy in chapters 8 through 11 is the departure of the glory of God from the temple. Here we see the cloud of God’s glory leaving on God’s chariot throne that Ezekiel saw in his vision.

v 23 **The glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain:** Remember that the Shekinah glory of God moved progressively from above the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies, to the door of the temple, to the east gate, and now we see it moving away from the city of Jerusalem, then pausing at the Mount of Olives **on the east side of the city**. I imagine God pausing to be a sign of his sorrow and regret over leaving His temple and the coming judgement of Jerusalem. We read last week how Jesus sorrowed over another coming judgement of Jerusalem (see Matthew 23:37)

“The vision’s present ending reflects its primary concern: the departure of Yahweh from the temple. In any case, to a person inside the city, the Mount of Olives represents the eastern horizon.” (Block)

ii. “No further movement is described, as if the prophet is saying that though the Lord has left his temple and the holy city he is still standing by in case there should be a repentance on the part of the people.” (Taylor)

iii. “The rabbis have enumerated ten stages whereby the Shekinah withdrew. These stages unmistakably reveal the loving and longing reluctance of God to leave His sanctuary where He dwelt in the midst of His beloved and erring people. Before He departed, however, He set forth the consoling promise of restoration for the remnant which we have been considering.” (Feinberg)

5. The end of the vision (v 24–25)

Ezekiel 11:24-25 NKJV

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.
²⁵ So I spoke to those in captivity of all the things the Lord had shown me.

v 24 **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:** Ezekiel in his vision now returns to **Chaldea** (another name for Babylon) where the vision ends.

v 25 **So I spoke to those in captivity all the things the Lord had shown me:** Here we see the principle of Freely you have received, freely give given by Jesus.

Matthew 10:7-8 NKJV

And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ ⁸ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

It’s so important to remember that God reveals truth to us, not so that we can go “wow”, but so that we can become His vessels to share that truth with others. We are Christ’s ambassadors. Do you remember what our message is?

2 Corinthians 5:20-21 NKJV

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.