

# ***I Am the God of mercy*** ...for the sake of my glory

## **Introduction**

In this part of our study of Ezekiel we will focus on God's promises to:

- restore Israel nationally (37:5,17)
- restore people spiritually (11:20; 14:11; 36:24-28; 37:23,27; c.f. Jer.31:31-34)
- install messiah as king (34:23; 37:24f; 45:7)

## **33 – The prophet as a watchman**

**vv.1-9 God wants Ezekiel to publicly proclaim his role as watchman (33:1).**

This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> time this analogy is used toward Ezekiel (c.f. 3:16ff).

- The 1<sup>st</sup> time was at the inauguration of his role as prophet to the exiles. He had a vision of the glory of God and was so agitated and angry (i.e. bitterness and heat of my heart) that he sat silent for a week.
  - Part of his agitation was the glory of the vision and
  - Part was the message – Jerusalem with its temple would be destroyed by Babylon and the greatness of Judah's sin & rebellion.
- This 2<sup>nd</sup> time comes immediately before the exiles heard that Jerusalem was destroyed.<sup>1</sup>

**vv.10-20 God tells the people about their personal responsibility to respond to Him.**

**vv.21-22 Jerusalem has fallen**

Ezekiel's 7 years being mute are over.<sup>2</sup>

**vv.23-32 My people just don't get it**

## **34 – The wicked shepherds and God's shepherd**

**vv.1-10 Out with the self-serving leadership**

Jeremiah 23:1-6:

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<sup>1</sup> The siege of Jerusalem is announced in 24:1-2, January 15, 588 BC. Jerusalem fell August 587 BC. Ezekiel received word from a messenger that Jerusalem had fallen January 8, 585 BC (~16 months after the event).

<sup>2</sup> He was called in 592-3 and hears of the fall of Jerusalem in January, 585, so he's essentially mute for 7 years.

John 10:11-16:

**vv.11-22 Restoration of theocracy**

Micah 2:12-13 (Jer.23; Isaiah 40:11)

Matthew 10:5f & 15:24 (c.f. John 10)

Here we see, in reverse order and reverse morality how the good shepherd acts:

Bad shepherds vv.3-4	God's shepherd v.16
They consumed & destroyed the flock v.3	The lost, I will seek
They didn't strengthen the weak v.4a	The strayed, I will bring back
They didn't heal the injured v.4b	The injured, I will heal
They didn't bring back the strays v.4c	The weak, I will strengthen
They didn't get the lost sheep v.4d	The fat, I will destroy (c.f. vv.17-22)

**35 – 36:15 Condemnation of Edom, and the nations <sup>3</sup>**

**36:16-38 – The conversion of Israel**

v.16-17 (c.f. Psalm 106:35-39 an exilic psalm).

**v. 18,19**

**vv.20-21 Your exile profanes my holy name.**

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<sup>3</sup> The chapter break seems inappropriate as the prophetic them continues into chapter 36.

**vv.22-23 God will be known amongst the nations...**

Other prophets make it clear that God is motivated for Israel's benefit; from his compassion and loving care (Isa.41:8-14; 43:1-4; 54:4-10; Jer.31).

God is not denying that it is for their sake but he is affirming the priority of His name over that.

**vv.24-30 ...therefore, God's people will be restored**

v.24 the exiled, regathered

v.25,29a the defiled, cleansed

v.26-27 the rebellious.

v.28-30 the disgraced, restored

**vv.31-32 shamed by God's grace**

They had been shamed by God's curse (36:1-15) but now they are ashamed because of God's blessing.

This is not the shame of bowed but unbroken pride but of having disgraced God in the face of receiving his love.

God is not ashamed of us...it is we, in the face of His overwhelming grace, who are ashamed of ourselves for how badly we've treated Him.

**vv. 33-38 The nations know YHWH Elohim because of the restoration**

**37 – The nation resurrected**

**vv.1-14 The vision of a restored Israel**

The promise in v.14 seems unfulfilled in Israel as a nation if we interpret it in light of the NT – the Spirit indwells those who hope in the atonement & resurrection of Christ (Ro.8:9ff).

Other texts suggest two great conversion periods for Israel:

- Some time, probably early in the tribulation, 144,000 Jews come to Christ. God supernaturally protects them and enables them to carry on a fruitful evangelistic ministry (Rev. 7:3-9; 14:3-5,14-16?).

- Toward the end of the tribulation, ~ 1/3 of the Jewish people realize that Jesus was their Messiah and turn to him (Zech. 12:10-13:9).

### vv.15-23 Prophetic illustration of the re-uniting of Israel & Judah into one nation.

### vv.24-28 Messiah will shepherd my people and I will live amongst them forever

#### References to Messiah in the Pentateuch

- He will defeat Satan - (Gen.3:15)<sup>4</sup>
- He will be God living with the Hebrews - (Gen.9:27)<sup>5</sup>
- He will bless all peoples - (Gen.12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; and 28:14)<sup>6</sup>
- He will come from Judah and will rule - (c.f. Gen. 49:8-10; Ez.21:27, 32).<sup>7</sup>
- He will triumph over all nations - (Num.24:15-19)<sup>8</sup>
- He will be a prophet - (Deut.18:15, 18)<sup>9</sup>

#### References to Messiah through the Davidic Period

- He will be a king - 1Sam.2:1-10; Hanna's prayer; this is a reference to a king during the time of the judges. No king but messiah would fit the claims she's making (e.g. exaltation & strengthening) b/c this was a conditional promise to David (many years later).
- He will be a priest - 1 Sam.2:27-36
- He will be a king from David's lineage - 2Sam.7 (Lk.1:32b-33)

#### References to Messiah in Psalms

- He will be a conquering king and a ruling Messiah - Ps.110, 2
- He will be rejected - Ps.118:22
- He will be betrayed - Ps.69:21, 109:25

<sup>4</sup> A battle will ensue between Satan and a male offspring of Eve's which that offspring will win, though not without cost; "seed" is a collective singular form, allowing it to serve for an entire race as well as an individual within that race; the suffix for "heel" is singular, thus "his heel" and thus the translation of *hu* as a singular masculine pronoun, "he will crush..."; the LXX translators understood this to refer to a single male individual; the Targum understand this passage to be messianic and finally, Eve herself (Gen.4:1) explained Cain as "I have gotten a man, even the Lord" (see Kaiser, p.42)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid; God will tabernacle with the Shemites (Semites, esp. Hebrews). This is not a slam dunk interpretation. Many scholars argue that 'he' is Japheth rather than God. However, Kaiser argues that 1. Since God is the subject in the first line, he continues to be the subject in the next line and so 'he' is God; 2. Ancient Hebrew commentaries saw 'he' as referring to God (e.g. the Targums & the Book of Jubilees) and 3. the term translated 'dwell' is *shekinah* the term used for the presence of God in the pillar of cloud/fire & filling the tabernacle w/ smoke, etc.

<sup>6</sup> The verb form argues that, 'Israel is how he will bless' *niphal* is the passive verb form used in all five passages in the Samaritan version, the Babylonian and Jerusalem Targum, this form carries the notion that Israel would be a means by which God would bless the nations; the word, "seed(s)" is a collective noun with group and individual aspects, see Gal.3:16; Abraham's offspring (plural and singular) will be a vehicle through which God will bless all people

<sup>7</sup> It would be through Abraham's great-grandson Judah that Israelite kings would arise until, "he to whom the rule rightfully belongs comes"; Shiloh is most likely a transliteration of a word *seloh*, *se* from *aser* "which" "whose"; *le* "belonging to" and *oh* "him"; this is how the LXX and the Babylonian Targum interpret it; in fact both Targums translate it, "until (king) Messiah comes"

<sup>8</sup> A male Israelite would arise who would triumph over Moab, Edom and the rest of the world; This cannot be referring to David's conquering b/c it's repeated by Jeremiah (48-49) although, for the present, it's not clear who the Edomites are any more; If sons of Sheth = sons of Seth, Then all peoples are intended, since Noah descended from Seth and all humanity from Noah.

<sup>9</sup> A prophet, like Moses, would arise one day; Moses spoke with God face to face (Nu.12:6-8)

- He will die and be resurrected - Ps.22:15,20; Ps.16:10
- He will be triumphant - Ps.68, 72

References to Messiah by 9<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> century prophets

- He will be a teacher - Joel 2:23
- He will be a second David - Hosea 3:4—5
- He will be the resurrected house of David - Micah 2:12-13
- He will be a coming ruler - Micah 5:1-4

The Messiah in Isaiah - The Messiah will be a God/man ruler

- 4:2--The Branch is a man, the Davidic messiah, a servant and God.<sup>10</sup>
- 7:10-15--*God with us* will be born of the virgin.<sup>11</sup>
- 9:1-7--A God/man will be born to rule the world.<sup>12</sup>
- 11:1-16--The son of Jesse will have a world wide reign at a time and in a manner which has not yet come to pass.
- 24:21-25--Clearly eschatological but there's an oblique reference to Messiah in verse 23.<sup>13</sup>
- 28:16--Tested, precious and the cornerstone

The Messiah in Ezekiel

- 34:23-24 – *my servant David* will shepherd my flock
- 37:24-28 – *my servant David* will be king, shepherd, prince when God lives with Israel
- 44:1-3 – *the prince* alone may enter the temple by the vestibule of the east gate (c.f. 46:8; nobody can enter through the gate once the glory of God does so.
- 45:7 – *the prince* has the zone from the east of the temple to the west of the temple
- 46:11-12 – *the prince* offers free will offerings
- 46:16-18 – *the prince* has offspring

<sup>10</sup> Jeremiah 23:5-6 refers to the *branch of David*; Zechariah 3:8 refers to *my servant, the branch*; Zechariah 6:12 indicates the branch is a man and Isaiah 4:2 claims the branch is of the Lord, thus emphasizing his deity. Who else can forgive sin (Isa.2:5-4:1; 4:3-4)

<sup>11</sup> Kaiser identifies the near reference with Hezekiah. It seems, though, that the text itself argues most strongly for identification with Mahershalalhashbaz (i.e. 1. immediately after the prophecy the "sign" points toward is the call for witnesses concerning the naming of the child; 2. Isaiah "draws near" the prophetess an expression used for first sexual contact btw. a man and his *alma*; 3. the theology of the *alma* sign concerns YHWH's sovereignty over the nations which the name Mahershalalhashbaz also signifies; 4. The prophecy of the sign is expanded upon right through the prophecy of the *messiah* strongly arguing that the *messiah* will 'fill-to-overflowing' the sign of the *alma* - namely God's sovereignty expressed through the sign).

<sup>12</sup> That the child is born and is of David indicate his human qualities whilst most of his titles indicate his deity; *pele'* = wonderful, one who does difficult or miraculous things; the names *Mighty God* and *Everlasting Father* clinch the deity of this character

<sup>13</sup> Chapters 24-27 are explicitly apocalyptic; the claim that the *Lord Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before its elders, gloriously, v.23* must be the messiah b/c Isa.2:1-4 and Micah 4:1-4 which clearly portray the Messiah doing this.

## Homework Assignment

- Read chapters 38-48
- Read Revelation 20 – 22:9 (**include more materials here**)
- Peruse Galatians and Hebrews noting the impact of Jesus atonement on temple practices.

*Prepare responses to the following:*

1. Create a table comparing and contrasting Ezekiel's prophecy of Gog/Magog (chs.38-39) with John's (Rev.20:7-10).
2. Why might this great battle relate to Jesus battle with antichrist? Defend this position.
3. Why might this great battle not relate to Jesus battle with antichrist? Defend this position.
4. Explain the existence of a Temple - that includes sin offerings - in light of New Testament teachings on the completeness of Jesus atonement?

**Note: Do not read books on the tribulation! Keep your analysis focused on scripture alone.**