

The Visions of Ezekiel

Preface

The once mighty *Nation of Israel* had dwindled to a pitiful group in the Southern Kingdom after Nebuchadnezzar conquered the people and made the land part of the Babylonian Empire in 606 BC. At that time, he removed the brightest young men from the area and took them to Babylon. In 597 BC he removed another group from the area and scattered them in various places throughout his empire. We believe that Ezekiel was taken from the Southern Kingdom in this second extraction. In 586 BC, Nebuchadnezzar overtook Jerusalem again where the holiest of holy places on earth was still standing, the Temple built by Solomon. Furthermore, the *Shekinah Glory of the LORD*, the cloud representing the presence of God, still hovered over the Ark of the Covenant behind the veil in the back of the Temple. The LORD knew what was going on in Jerusalem and the rest of the world; He was causing it all to happen. Frankly, Nebuchadnezzar could not do anything to the Temple in that day as long as the LORD resided within the structure. But the days were diminishing for the Southern Kingdom in the LORD's eyes and He would soon depart from the Temple and Nebuchadnezzar would destroy it and carry back to Babylon almost all of its holy furniture and utensils. Through Ezekiel, the LORD will tell all the Jews details of the events that will lead up to and include the destruction of the Temple. Then, the LORD will tell the Jews about the millennial Temple that will come at the Second Coming of the LORD. From Temple to Temple the story will be revealed for all the people of the world to read, understand and prepare for.

Three sentences are repeated throughout the thirteen visions of the book of Ezekiel. They are extremely important and should not be lightly noticed. The context of the passage in which these sentences reside tells the tale of the LORD's message to mankind in this book. They are:

They shall know that I am the LORD.

The hand of the LORD was upon me.

The word of the LORD came to me.

Upon these three sentences, all the prophecies within this book turn and record in detail the plans of the LORD concerning His chosen people from Solomon's Temple to the Millennial Temple.

Jim Hastings

Lesson 1

People in the Book

I. People in the Book – In Order of Appearance

The people in the book of Ezekiel include individuals and groups. Truth be told, throughout the Bible, when a nation, country, city, town or village is mentioned, it is truly a reference to the people of that location and the actions of those people whether good or bad. The same is true in this book. For instance, when the LORD is speaking to *Ezekiel*, it is a message directly for him. When He is speaking to the *House of Israel*, He is speaking directly to all the people who were included in the ten Jewish tribes of the Northern Kingdom. When the LORD is speaking to the *House of Judah*, He is speaking to the two Jewish tribes of the Southern Kingdom. And so, it is important that we become familiar with the people in this book, who they are, what they did, why they are mentioned. It is important that we know their stories. By getting to know the people of the book in this lesson, there will be no need to interrupt the flow of the story in the chapters to explain fully who these people are and why they are addressed by the LORD in these visions.

Although many of the people are mentioned in several of the thirteen visions, in this lesson we will address each in the first vision in which they appear.

A. Vision One – (Eze 1:1 – 7:27)

1. Ezekiel (1:3)

Ezekiel is the main character throughout the book and his name means *God will strengthen*.¹ In 1st Chronicles 24:16 his name is spelled *Jehezkel*. Thirteen times during *Ezekiel's* ministry, the LORD placed His hand on this prophet to speak a vision through him. Some of the visions are long, some of the visions are short. Within those thirteen visions, the LORD would assign fifty-eight tasks for the prophet to perform and complete.

Who was *Ezekiel*? He was a young man living in the Southern Kingdom when he was exiled to a village on the Chebar River, a tributary that fed into the Euphrates River. By the time *Ezekiel* was exiled to this new home in the village of Tel-Abib, Daniel had already been exiled to Babylon for eight years and had been elevated to serve as the second in command of the Babylonian Empire by Nebuchadnezzar for six years. At the time of his exile, *Ezekiel* was not yet to the age that any of the Jewish exiles would recognize him as a true prophet of God. Prophets and priests were not recognized in Jewish life in those offices until they reached the age of thirty. The opening verse of *Ezekiel* says the following.

Eze 1:1 Now it came about in the thirtieth year, on the fifth *day* of the fourth month, while I was by the river Chebar among the exiles, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.

Many commentators and scholars have asserted that *Ezekiel* was thirty years of age when the LORD spoke to him in the first vision. However, this date is a reference to the number of years that the Babylonian Empire had been in existence since its establishment by Nebuchadnezzar's

¹ Easton's Illustrated Dictionary

father, Nabonidus in 627 BC. Therefore, it was the fifth day of the fourth month of 597 BC. The Jewish people used numbers for the names of the months throughout their history and into their exile. In Babylon, the Jews began to attach Babylonian names to the months and by the time of the Persian Empire and their return from exile, the names of the Jewish calendar in use today were established. Therefore, when *Ezekiel* states that the LORD came to him on the fifth day of the fourth month, he is telling the reader it happened on either Tammuz 5th or Tevet 5th. Why the difference? The lunar calendar was the initial standard of all the world until the Romans, in the first century BC, began to attempt to convert to a solar calendar that would be in line with the seasons. The whole world began its calendar year with the month of Tishri. However, in the Exodus, the LORD instructed Moses to set the beginning of the Jewish year in the month of Nisan. Therefore, the Jewish nation celebrated two New Years, a civil new year in Tishri and a religious new year in Nisan. Babylon celebrated only the civil new year with Tishri. Because *Ezekiel* was in exile in the Babylonian Empire and he was speaking of the civil years of the existence of the empire, this may be a reference to the 5th of Tevet. If by some chance, *Ezekiel* was speaking of the religious year of his Jewish people, it would be the 5th of Tammuz. Because this verse is speaking of the number of years of the existence of the Babylonian Empire, we will take the position that this date is a reference to the civil year and the month to Tevet.

How old is *Ezekiel* at the time of the first vision? We really do not know. However, we can be certain that by the time of the 5th of Tevet, he would have been at least thirty years old.

Was *Ezekiel* married? Yes. The death of his wife is mentioned in this book. We do not see any mention of children.

We need to make one important note about Ezekiel's message throughout the entire book; it is all in first person except for Ezekiel 1:2-3. No doubt these two verses were added by someone other than *Ezekiel*. As we will see in our study, this one addition by some well-meaning preacher causes great difficulty in justifying the dates of the visions and the LORD's first call to *Ezekiel*.

2. Four Living Creatures - Cherubs (1:5)

For those who have studied the book of Revelation, these are the same *four living creatures* positioned eternally at the throne of the LORD. One has the face of a man, one has the face of a lion, one has the face of a calf and one has the face of an eagle. However, in the book of Ezekiel, he states that each *living creature* has all four faces. That may have been the case with John in the Revelation too; however, John recorded what he saw as they appeared to him. The Scripture indicates that these creatures are cherubs. We can call them angels. The Scripture also indicates that each cherub faced outward in all four positions around the throne. Therefore, from John's position, he saw the face of man in front of the LORD looking straight at him. To the right of the LORD, John could not see the face of the man pointing directly west, but he could see the face of the calf looking at him. To the left of the LORD, John could not see the face of the man pointing directly east, but he could see the face of the lion looking directly at him. At the back of the LORD's throne, the face of the man pointed away from the chair, but the face of the eagle pointed toward the chair of the LORD and that was the face John could see. To say all of this another way, the four cherubs with the four faces standing around the throne of the LORD always have the face of the eagle pointing toward the LORD and the face of the man pointing away from the LORD. The faces of the lion are always to the left of the man and the face of the calf is always to the right.

These cherubim creatures have wings like a bird, hands like a man and feet like the hoofs of cattle. They are eternal attendants to the throne of the LORD. The throne has wheels facing front and back and wheels that intersect within those wheels that face side to side. Wheels can take the throne forward and backward and side to side.

3. The Almighty, the LORD (1:24)

The Almighty, the LORD is a title for the Second Person of the *Trinity*. It is an English translation of the Hebrew words *El Shaddai*. It means *the mountain one* in the original.² The Book of Job uses this title 31 times. The Revelation uses the Greek equivalent term nine times to express a *feeling of power*. The title is the same in all its renderings such as *The Almighty God, the LORD God Almighty, the Almighty LORD God and the LORD Almighty*. They are all good renderings of the Hebrew *El Shaddai*.

4. Son of Man (2:1)

Throughout the entire prophetic book, when the LORD speaks to Ezekiel, He addresses him as *son of man*. Across the Scripture, specifically in Job, Psalms, Isaiah, Daniel, Hebrews and Luke, the term is used to remind the reader of the humanity of man, his weakness and his frailty. Therefore, it can be rightfully applied with the same definition to Ezekiel.

5. House of Israel (3:15)

The *House of Israel* is a reference to the Northern Kingdom and the Jewish tribes which formed the new nation after the death of Solomon, during the reign of his son Rehoboam. These ten tribes were Asher, Dan, Naphtali, Zebulun, Gad, Issachar, Rueben, Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon. The Northern Kingdom became such a sinful nation that the LORD sent the Assyrians to gather the godly from its land and destroyed most of the rest. We might well call the godly that were taken from the kingdom a remnant that amounted to a tenth of the population. This did not include the poorest of the poor. They were left behind because the Assyrians thought they were of no value in their empire. By 722 BC, the remnant of the Northern Kingdom was in exile in Assyria and the land was controlled by the Assyrian kings. The kings deported some of their own people from an area near Nineveh, called Sumer, to the defunct Northern Kingdom. Through the years, they would intermarry with the poorest of the poor left behind. The result was a nation of half-Jews who would be called Samaritans by the time of Jesus' life. The final exile of the people of the Northern Kingdom occurred exactly 175 year before the LORD called Ezekiel to be a prophet in the opening pages of this book. Therefore, when the term, *House of Israel* is used, it should be directly associated with the remnant of the Northern Kingdom in exile in the Assyrian Empire area. Ezekiel was living among these exiles at the Chebar River. Even when Nebuchadnezzar, as a general under his father, destroyed Nineveh fourteen years before and the Assyrian Empire became part of the Babylonian Empire, the remnant exiles of the Northern Kingdom were not moved from their homes in Assyria, they were just assimilated into the Babylonian Empire. Nebuchadnezzar added exiles from the Southern Kingdom to those in the towns of the old Assyrian Empire. We do not know the tribal heritage of Ezekiel. However, it is possible that Ezekiel was a descendant of one of the northern tribes that was exiled to the Assyrian area and that is why Ezekiel was at the Chebar River instead of in Babylon with Daniel. At the fall of the Northern Kingdom 175 years before, many of the north's residents moved to the Southern Kingdom for safety. On the other hand, the exiles of the Northern Kingdom in

² Easton's Illustrated Dictionary

Assyria needed a prophet in their area to speak to them a word from the LORD. After all, they were now part of the Babylonian Empire under the authority of Daniel who was second in command under King Nebuchadnezzar. They needed to be prepared to return to the Promised Land spiritually and mentally just as much as those exiles from the Southern Kingdom. With all that in mind, Ezekiel was the prophet to the Northern Kingdom exiles of the *House of Israel* living in the old Assyrian Empire. Daniel was the prophet of the Southern Kingdom exiles of the *House of Judah* while at the same time, Jeremiah and Habakkuk were prophets of those left in the Southern Kingdom who would not be taken into exile until 586 BC.

6. Exiles (3:15)

In Ezekiel, an *exile* is a person taken captive from the Northern or Southern Kingdom to live in either the Assyrian or Babylonian Empire. When the Scripture uses the word *exiles*, it means a group of people taken captive from those kingdoms and forced to live in one of those Empires.³ In Ezekiel 3:15, when the prophet speaks to the *exiles*, it is a reference to the remnant taken from the Northern Kingdom and living in the old Assyrian Empire. However, once the *exiles of the House of Judah* are introduced in chapter 5, then the student must carefully discern if Ezekiel is speaking specifically to the *exiles* of the north, south or a combination of the two.

7. House of Judah (5:6)

When Ezekiel addresses the *House of Judah*, the same concept explained above with the *House of Israel* applies with a few changes. First, the *House of Judah* was the Southern Kingdom and it consisted primarily of two tribes, Judah and Benjamin. That is not to say that members of the other ten tribes were not living in the Southern Kingdom when Nebuchadnezzar removed some exiles to Babylon in 606 BC. There were! But not as great a number as had been taken out of the Northern Kingdom by the Assyrian Empire! Once again, we are speaking of a remnant of people taken into exile from the Southern Kingdom with the poorest of the poor left behind. What about the majority of the people in the Southern Kingdom? They rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar and were killed. When Ezekiel addresses the *House of Judah*, it is a direct reference to the remnant of the Southern Kingdom in exile or those still in the Southern Kingdom before Nebuchadnezzar brought it to a complete end in 586 BC.

8. Sons of Israel (6:5)

In Chapter 6, the LORD speaks to the *Sons of Israel*. It is a title for all the living descendants of the twelve tribes of the sons of Jacob. The location of the individuals of these twelve tribes does not matter to the LORD. They can be in exile or still in the Promised Land, it does not matter. When the LORD speaks to the *Sons of Israel*, it is time for all Jews to listen to the words spoken by Ezekiel, wherever they are living in the world.

9. The Remnant (6:8)

We have already used the word *remnant* in explaining the *House of Israel*, the *House of Judah* and the *Sons of Israel*. Now we will explain the term. A *remnant* is something that is left over. In the Scripture it is a reference to the righteous people who survived an event pertaining to a divine judgment from the LORD. The *remnant* never included the ungodly, just the godly. That is not to say that the descendants of this *remnant* were always godly.

³ Easton's Illustrated Dictionary

10. The King and the Prince (7:27)

It was 597 BC in this vision and Nebuchadnezzar had installed Zedekiah as king of the Southern Kingdom, which had been part of the Babylonian Empire since it was conquered in 606 BC. Zedekiah was only 21 years of age when he was installed as the king. In this passage we will discover that Zedekiah was the king and he was determined to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar and establish anew the Southern Kingdom as an independent nation. This passage will tell us, “The king will mourn, the prince will be clothed with horror.” Eleven years later the record shows in 2 Kings 25:7, “And they slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, then put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him with bronze fetters and brought him to Babylon.” And so, this part of the first vision was fulfilled eleven years after it was given.

As we go through the rest of Ezekiel other kings and princes will be mentioned. The identity of each king and prince will need to be determined by the context of each vision.

B. Vision Two – (Eze 8:1 – 19:14)

1. The 70 Elders of Israel (8:11)

The Hebrew culture held a great reverence for their older men in the tribes. Age was important to the people and the wisest of the older men were considered the depository of knowledge. Reading and writing were not as important at that time as storytelling and wisdom. During the days of the Exodus, Moses was instructed to select 70 older men from the twelve tribes to help with the management of the people, their disagreements and their needs (Numbers 11:16). These 70 elders were installed in the wilderness of Sinai by Moses and that established the basis for what would become the Sanhedrin. Throughout the rest of the Old Testament, 70 elders would sit at the gates of Jerusalem and act as judges among the people for legal disputes and transactions exactly as they were designed to do in the days of Moses. After the complete destruction of the Jewish system in 586 BC, when the last exiles were taken to Babylon, the elder system ceased to operate in the Promised Land. However, it is evident in the Scripture that the system continued among the Jews in some form during the exile in Babylon. Upon the return to the Promised Land in 536 BC, the system was established anew and continued until the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD.

In Ezekiel, the term *70 Elders of Israel* is a reference to the designated older men who acted as judges and magistrates at the city gates in Jerusalem. However, these 70 elders have led the nation astray by participating in the great abominations in the Southern Kingdom.

2. The Twenty-five Men Worshiping the Sun (8:16)

Ezekiel will see these 25 men between the portico and the Temple in Jerusalem. This location indicates that these men were priests. All offerings to the LORD in that day were made through the mediation of the priests in that location. These 25 men were to be servants of the LORD. Even though they held that position, they worshiped the sun too. They were priests of other gods – an abomination.

3. The Six Executioners (9:1-2)

Because of the abomination of the *70 Elders of Israel*, the LORD would send seven men through the city. Six of those men would carry weapons of destruction and act as executioners when Jerusalem topples to Nebuchadnezzar. Ezekiel had been a prophet for six years at the time of this vision and the fulfillment of this prophecy would not take place for another four years, but it would take place! These six men would kill the rebellious Jews who refused to submit to

Nebuchadnezzar. They would not kill those who had been marked by the seventh man entering the city with these six.

4. Man Dressed in Linen with Writing Case (9:2)

The *man dressed in linen with a writing case* is the seventh man who would enter Jerusalem at the time of the destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar. His dress represented the purity found only in the LORD and one of His servants. He was a scribe or a recorder for the LORD. He would be carrying the records containing the LORD's information about the hearts of the people in the city. This man would take his quill and mark those who had their hearts right with God. The six executioners would kill everyone, man, woman, child, without the mark from this man *dressed in linen*. The process was to start with the slaying of the elders.

5. The Twenty-five Men at the Gate (11:1-2)

These 25 men were not the same group as those found in chapter 8. Those men were priests in front of the Temple. These 25 members were at the gate and that means they were judges or magistrates. We are mentioning these 25 men here because among them were two extremely evil judges whom we will identify next.

6. Jaazaniah (11:1-2)

Jaazaniah was a judge at the gate of the city and guilty of giving evil advice to the people.

7. Pelatiah (11:1-2)

Pelatiah was with Jaazaniah and he, too, was a judge at the gate of the city guilty of giving evil advice to the people. One of them would fall dead while Ezekiel was delivering the prophecy.

8. Prince of Jerusalem (12:10)

The context of the passage is about the rebellion of King Zedekiah; therefore, the *Prince of Jerusalem* was Zedekiah.

9. Israel's Prophets (13:4)

When the LORD addressed *Israel's prophets*, it was a reference to all the false prophets in the Southern Kingdom who defied and denied the true prophets of the LORD and His Word.

10. Noah, Daniel and Job (14:14)

These are three well-established and respected men of the Bible. Noah was chosen by the LORD to build the ark and carry the righteous humans and animals from pre-flood to post-flood. Daniel was a Jewish contemporary of Ezekiel and at the time he was second in command of the Babylonian Empire. Job was the righteous man who lost everything tangible in life, trusted in the LORD through it all and was blessed in the end double from what he had to begin with. Each of these men was loved by the LORD and highly respected. The LORD used these three in Ezekiel to make a point. The LORD's wrath would prevail even if these three men were in the bulls-eye of the destruction. The LORD would still complete His wrath even if these three were in the line of fire. The LORD used these three to emphasize His anger with the Southern Kingdom.

11. The Amorite Father and Hittite Mother (16:3)

When the LORD was addressing the unfaithfulness of the city of Jerusalem, He summed up the history of the city starting with its proverbial father and mother. At the time of the Tower of Babel, when the LORD confused the nations and sent each family group to different parts of the world with their different languages, the Canaanites were sent to the land we know as Israel today. Canaan was the fourth son of Ham, the son of Noah. His family with his new language settled on their new land. As the years passed, his sons established families and each family turned into a tribe named after each son. Canaan's offspring populated the land from Lebanon to the Red Sea. In time, all of his sons and grandsons established tribes of their own. Together, all the tribes that were created formed the *Canaanite Nation*. Two of those tribes were the *Amorites and the Hittites*. A man from the *Amorite* tribe married a woman from the *Hittite* tribe and one of their sons was named Jebu. He established the *Jebusite* tribe and founded the city of *Jebus* in the current location of Jerusalem. A great and powerful fortress called the *Jebusite Citadel* was built there. It was thought to be impenetrable, but David penetrated it in his seventh year as King of Israel and moved his capital there from Hebron and renamed it to Jerusalem.

12. The Egyptians (16:26)

The Egyptians were the cousins of the Canaanites. Mizram was the brother of Canaan. Mizram is the Hebrew name that has been translated as *Egypt* in our English language.⁴

After studying the story of the Exodus from Egypt under the direction of Moses, it is evident that even though the Israelites got out of Egypt, Egypt never got out of Israel. Constantly through the forty years in the wilderness the people longed to return to their old lives in Egypt. Upon entering into the Promised Land and after the death of the Pharaoh of the Exodus, the *Nation of Israel* began relying on the *Nation of Egypt* during the tough times and famines that came to the land. Instead of crying to God, Israel cried to Egypt. Instead of trusting in the LORD, Israel trusted in Egypt. When we meet up with Egypt for the first time in Ezekiel, Israel had reached out to Egypt seeking help to fight against Nebuchadnezzar. Israel was the main country the LORD accused her of committing adultery instead of being faithful to Him.

13. Philistines (16:27)

The Philistines were one of the Canaanite tribes, descendants of Canaan's son, Sidon who was the father of the Phoenicians. After the establishment of the Phoenicians, a group broke off and traveled south to populate the southern coast of Canaan Land and they took on the name Philistines. By the time of Ezekiel, the Edomites had abandoned their land south of the Dead Sea and moved into the Philistine land, intermarrying along the way. Claudius Caesar mispronounced their tribal name and called them Palestinians and it was forever changed. They hated Israel and they hated the LORD. This powerful tribe makes frequent attacks on the Hebrews to this very day in an almost perpetual war. Throughout Ezekiel, when the Philistine name is mentioned, it will always be associated with hate for Israel and the LORD's hate for the Philistines. Yet, some of the Philistine daughters were beautiful and the Jewish sons could not control their desires. The instruction from the LORD was clear, marry only descendants of Jacob, but as you will remember, even with Samson, his desire for Delilah brought his downfall and death.

⁴ Easton's Illustrated Dictionary

14. Assyrians (16:28)

The Southern Kingdom had flirted with Assyria, even after the Assyrian Empire had destroyed the Northern Kingdom. Babylon may have controlled Assyria in the days of Ezekiel but the Southern Kingdom still sought help from the Assyrian country in defiance of Babylon. For that, the LORD would punish the Southern Kingdom because she was not willing to trust in Him alone.

15. Chaldeans (16:29)

By the time of Ezekiel, Babylon was a major exporter of just about everything. The Southern Kingdom had fallen into the trap of wanting what all the nations wanted. Israel was never satisfied with what the LORD had provided her. She wanted more, always more. Never satisfied, she played the harlot with the Chaldean Babylonians instead of trusting in the LORD.

16. Samaria the Sister (16:46)

After the death of Solomon, the *Nation of Israel* divided under Rehoboam and the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah were formed. Jerusalem remained the capital of the Southern Kingdom and the Northern Kingdom was forced to establish a new capital for its people. It was built on the land Jacob had purchased while he was alive, and it was called Shechem. Later in history, it called Tirzah.⁵ When Omri became king, he wanted a new capital. He built the city of Samaria and just about all the people who lived in the old capital of Shechem moved to the new capital with the king (1 Kings 16:24). In Ezekiel, the LORD considered the city of Samaria to be a sister city of Jerusalem. This designation is not a positive one – Samaria was a sinful city where idol worship prevailed, and the Mosaic laws and festivals had been altered in defiance of the LORD's instructions.

17. Sodom the Sister (16:46)

Southeast of Jerusalem, not more than 40 miles away, a city called Sodom once stood. It was an evil city that was surely guilty of many sins, but the story of Sodom reveals only one sin – homosexuality. For that sin, the LORD destroyed that city along with Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim and Bela. The destruction of those cities was so devastating and explosive that it formed the lowest point on the face of the earth and created the Dead Sea. Sodom was a thriving city in the beautiful green valley of the Jordan River during the days of Abraham. The destruction of the city and the formation of the Dead Sea occurred in the nine months before Isaac was born. Isaac never knew a world without the Dead Sea and no one else has since his birth. The LORD considered Sodom a sister of Jerusalem along with Samaria. Samaria was evil, Sodom was evil and Jerusalem had become just as bad.

18. Daughter of Edom and Daughters of Philistines (16:57)

To the south of the Dead Sea, the Edomite cousins of the Israelites lived. During the time of Joshua, the Edomites abandoned their land and moved to the area of the Philistines and began to intermarry. By the time Nebuchadnezzar was knocking on the door of Jerusalem, all relationships between the sons of the Southern Kingdom and the daughters of the Edomites and Philistines had come to an end, not because the sons of the Southern Kingdom wanted the relationships to end but because the Jews were a stench in the nostrils of the daughters of the Edomites and the Philistines.

⁵ Easton's Illustrated Dictionary

19. The First Great Eagle (17:3)

The prophecy about the *First Great Eagle* foretells the coming action of Nebuchadnezzar.

20. The Second Great Eagle (17:7)

The prophecy about the *Second Great Eagle* foretells the relationship with the King of Egypt, Pharaoh Hophra.

21. King of Babylon (17:11)

In context, the *Great Eagle* is identified as the *King of Babylon* who is Nebuchadnezzar.

22. Pharaoh (17:17)

The title of Pharaoh always applies to the King of Egypt everywhere in the Holy Scripture – Ezekiel is no different. During the days of Zedekiah, Hophra was the Pharaoh in Egypt and the two had made an alliance against Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24-25).

C. Vision Three – (Exe 20:1 – 23:49)

1. Sons of Ammon and Moab (21:28)

Ammon and Moab were the sons of Lot, conceived by his two daughters following the wrath of the LORD that destroyed Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim and Bela and caused the formation of the Dead Sea. Ammon was nothing more than a large city state with Rabbah as its capital. During the days of Zedekiah, Amminadab II, the son of Hissalel was the king of Ammon with Rabbah as his capital. After the fall of Jerusalem, Baalis would become the king in 580 BC. After that, Ammon would become part of the Babylonian Empire under the control of Nebuchadnezzar and the area would be run by administrators or as mentioned in Daniel, *prefects*.⁶ Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city of Rabbah and left it in total ruins. Years later, Arabs began repopulating the area and today we know it as Amman, Jordan.

2. Oholah the Elder (23:4)

Oholah is the LORD's nickname for the city of Samaria. It means *the woman in the tent*.⁷

3. Oholibah the Sister (23:4)

Oholibah is the LORD's nickname for the city of Jerusalem. It means *my tent is in her*.⁸ Oholah and Oholibah were daughters of the same mother, *the original nation of Israel* officially established in earnest at the foot of Mount Sinai.

D. Vision Five – (26:1 – 28:26)

1. Elders of Gebal (27:9)

When the city of Tyre was attacked, its leader would reach out for help from the *elders of Gebal*. Today the city is called *Dschebel* and it is about 25 miles north of *Beirut* in Lebanon. It was a famous Syrian port city that was mentioned in Egyptian writings as far back as the time of Abraham. The help of the *elders from Gebal* would not be enough to save Tyre.

⁶ Daniel 2:48

⁷ Easton's Illustrated Dictionary

⁸ Ibid

2. Leader of Tyre (28:2)

This vision addresses the future fate of the human leader or ruler of the city of Tyre. In this case, it would be the king during the rule of Nebuchadnezzar.

3. King of Tyre (28:11)

After addressing the *leader of Tyre*, the LORD then addresses the true *King of Tyre*, a non-human. This is a direct reference to Satan whom the city of Tyre adored.

4. The Great Monster (29:1)

The *great monster* is mentioned twice in Ezekiel. In both occurrences the LORD calls the Pharaoh of Egypt the *great monster*.

E. Vision Twelve – (Eze 33:21 – 39:29)

1. Shepherds of Israel (34:2)

A shepherd is responsible for tending and caring for the sheep to the best of his ability in order to keep the animals healthy. During the life of the *Nation of Israel*, the LORD provided shepherds to care for the people to direct them in the paths they should walk and keep them healthy in the LORD. However, by the time of Ezekiel, the *Shepherds of Israel* were leading the people of the nation down the wrong paths and feeding them false messages of hope that were in direct contradiction to the plans of the LORD. These were evil shepherds in the LORD's eyes and they would be punished. That is not to say that all the shepherds were evil. Surely Jeremiah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk and Obadiah were shepherds within the city walls of Jerusalem at the time and their messages were true and faithful to the LORD, but He is directing this term to those who were clearly in opposition to Him.

2. David (34:23)

This *David* is a reference to the original *King David*, the second king of the *Nation of Israel*. He was beloved by the LORD. This passage mentions *David* returning with the LORD to reign with Him during His 1,000-year kingdom. *David* will be the prince and the LORD will be the king. *David* will have a special place in the Temple described in the last eight chapters of the book of Ezekiel where he will work and serve. He will be the resurrected *David* in his resurrected body.

3. Joseph (37:19)

Joseph was the father of Ephraim and Manasseh. Ephraim was the youngest; however, when Jacob blessed them at the bidding of Joseph, Jacob switched his hands and gave Ephraim the blessing that should have gone to the oldest – Manasseh. In Ezekiel, *Joseph* represents Ephraim specifically and in the context all the tribes of the Northern Kingdom. In the context of the passage, the LORD would gather all the tribes associated in the Northern Kingdom with *Joseph* and unite them with all the tribes of the Southern Kingdom symbolized by the name of *Judah*, *Joseph's* brother. The promise in this passage is that the LORD will reunite the two kingdoms when He returns to rule during His 1,000-year reign as King on earth.

4. Gog (38:2)

Gog is the king of Magog and all its surrounding tribal areas. In the middle of the Tribulation of Israel, *Gog* will one day lead an army with the intention of taking over the Promised Land.

He will be stopped and defeated in the northern portion of the Promised Land just as he crosses over the boundary line from Lebanon. It will take seven months to bury all the dead of *Gog's* army. The burial ground will be called *Hamon-gog* and it will be east of the Sea of Galilee. He is mentioned in the Revelation for his part in the Tribulation; however, the full story of his attempt is found here in Ezekiel.

F. Vision Thirteen – (40:1 – 48:35)

1. Man with a Measuring Rod (40:2)

In the final vision, Ezekiel's task was to record the measurements for the building of the 1,000-year Temple in which the LORD will reign after His Second Coming. The *man with a measuring rod* did the work; Ezekiel did all the writing. In the Revelation, John also had a helper who did the work to measure the New Jerusalem and John did the writing.

2. Sons of Zadok (40:46)

The *sons of Zadok* were descendants of the tribe of Levi and specifically they were descendants of Aaron who was a Levite. Ezekiel reveals that at the time of the exile from Jerusalem, the *sons of Zadok* were the only true and faithful priests in the service of the LORD. Because of that, they will be the only priests allowed to serve at the altar in the future Temple during the LORD's 1,000-year reign.

3. Sons of Levi (40:46)

The first mention of the *Sons of Levi* is found in this passage; however, the subject of these *sons of Levi* is directed specifically to the *sons of Zadok* mentioned above who will be the only priests worthy to serve the LORD in the 1,000-year Temple. Later, in chapter 48, Levi will be honored to have a gate in the 1,000-year temple named after him and located on the north side of the city that the Revelation calls the *New Jerusalem*.