

Chapter Ten

1) Then I looked and behold, on the firmament that was over the heads of the cherubim there appeared above them something like a sapphire in form resembling a throne. 2) And he said to the man clothed in linen, "Go in among the whirling wheels underneath the cherubim; fill your hands with burning coals from between the cherubim and scatter them over the city." And he went in before my eyes. 3) Now the cherubim were standing on the south side of the house when the man went in; and a cloud filled the inner court. 4) And the glory of the Lord went up from the cherubim to the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the glory of the Lord. 5) And the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard as far as the outer court like the voice of God Almighty when he speaks. 6) And when he commanded the man clothed in linen, "Take fire from between the whirling wheels, from between the cherubim," he went in and stood beside a wheel. 7) And a cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubim to the fire that was between the cherubim and took some of it and put it into the hands of the man clothed in linen who took it and went out. 8) The cherubim appeared to have the form of a human hand under their wings. 9) And I looked, and behold, there were four wheels beside the cherubim, one beside each cherub; and the appearance of the wheels was like sparkling chrysolite. 10) And as for their appearance, the four had the same likeness as if a wheel were within a wheel. 11) When they went, they went in any of their four directions without turning as they went, but in whatever direction the front wheel faced the others followed without turning as they went. 12) And their rims and their spokes and the wheels were full of eyes round about—the wheels that the four of them had. 13) As for the wheels, they were called in my hearing the whirling wheels. 14) And every one had four faces: the first face was the face of the cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle. 15) And the cherubim mounted up. These were the living creatures that I saw by the river Chebar. 16) And when the cherubim went, the wheels went beside them; and when the cherubim lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the wheels did not turn from beside them. 17) When they stood still, these stood still, and when they mounted up, these mounted up with them; for the spirit of the living creatures was in them. 18) Then the glory of the Lord went forth from the threshold of the house and stood over the cherubim. 19) And the cherubim lifted up their wings and mounted up from the earth in my sight as they went forth with the wheels beside them; and they stood at the door of the east gate of the house of the Lord; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them. 20) These were the living creatures that I saw underneath the God of Israel by the river Chebar; and I knew that they were cherubim. 21) Each had four faces and each four wings and underneath their wings the semblance of human hands. 22) And as for the likeness of their faces, they were the very faces whose appearance I had seen by the river Chebar. They went every one straight forward.

As not unexpected, a new chapter beginning with the conjunctive *v-* or “then” which indicates that as soon as the man clothed in linen finished what the Lord commanded

him, attention shifts to Ezekiel's new vision. When the prophet looks and beholds (*ra'ah* and *hineh* (cf. 8.2), he's doing this after a near universal slaughter of Jerusalem's inhabitants. While the conjunctive does play an important role throughout the Book of Ezekiel as it does with many other biblical texts, in cases like the present one it's more important. That is to say, *v-* heightens the immediacy of tragic events, how they're connected with what just transpired and what is to transpire.

As for those whom the scribe had marked, nothing further is said; perhaps they decided to abandon the city and take refuge elsewhere. They will stand out, however, by reason of that *tav* or mark in the form of a cross on their foreheads which they can't remove. In one sense it's a badge of honor among all they encounter as well as a reminder of those who had been slain. One can't help but draw a certain parallel with the mark God put upon Cain in Gen 4.15, '*oth* rendered also as a portent. Nevertheless, this '*oth* prevented people from slaying him.

Ezekiel's attention is drawn to something resembling a sapphire or *saphyr* usually associated with the color blue which ties in with the firmament (*raqyah*, cf. 1.22) and image of the throne (*kise'*) chariot in 1.26. Vs. 1 also has the noun *demuth* (form, cf. 8.1). Note that 1.26 reads "above the firmament" or *mimahal* whereas the verse at hand reads "on the firmament" or the preposition '*el* or literally "to." It seems that the current vision (though that term isn't used here) is the object of a more direct seeing and beholding. The major difference is that cherubim are involved (cf. 9.3) and are mentioned seventeen times in this relatively short chapter. This shows that they are a critical component of the vision as guardians of the ark of the Lord.

In the verse at hand these angelic beings are presented as supporting the firmament which in Gen 1.6 is "in the midst of the waters" serving to separate the waters above from those below. Thus we could say that on both sides of the firmament are the indeterminate waters over which the Spirit hovered. So from the chaos represented by the waters emerges this vision which happens right after the wholesale slaughter of men, women and children depicted in Chapter Nine.

In vs. 2 Ezekiel sees and beholds the Lord speaking to the scribe, the same man clothed in linen who put the mark of salvation upon those lamenting Jerusalem's abominable practices. He is to go in among the wheels beneath the cherubim. The preposition *beyn* is used from "among," more along the lines as "between" and not the familiar *betok* indicative of in the midst of. This is a dangerous thing to do because the wheels are whirring or *galgal*, a noun for such devices and found next in

vs. 6. Compare with *'ophan* in 1.15, *galgal* signifying more that which is round as a circle and hence the ability to turn quickly. Such wheels in vs. 2 are located beneath the cherubim—presumably four of them—and enable them to move. In the case at hand, this ark, if you will, (it forms the representation associated with Moses and Solomon's temple) has the ability to move on its own compared with the one in Exodus which needed to be carried.

Beneath the wheeled cherubim are burning coals between (*beyn*) the cherubim which the scribe is to scatter over Jerusalem, *zaraq* also as to sprinkle. This verb is used frequently when Moses sprinkles the altar with the blood of sacrifice. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness" [36.25]. Apparently the scribe could pick up these coals in his bare hands just as in vs. 7 he receives fire from one of the cherubim. No direct explanation is given for this scattering of burning coals. However, it infers the cleansing of Jerusalem from abominable deeds once those who had practiced them are no more. In sum, Jerusalem is devoid of any inhabitants, even the presumably small number of those whom the scribe had marked. Vs. 2 concludes with the sentence "And he went in, in before my eyes," an observation which captures Ezekiel's feeling toward the scribe, wondering whether or not he'll be able to get out.

Vs. 3 specifies the location of the cherubim and hence the implied ark, that is, on the south side of the house, *bayth* (cf. 1.27) often used in reference to the temple. This term gives the sacred place a homey appeal, if you will, as well as contrasting it with the awful abominations that had taken place there. The south side represents the opposite or the north side, location of the "seat of the image of jealousy" noted in 8.3. It is the entry place for the scribe also described in terms of a cloud which filled the inner court or *chaser* (cf. 4.17). While taking this in, Ezekiel couldn't help but make the association with Moses who "went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain" [Ex 24.15].

Vs. 4 says that the divine *kavod* (first time mentioned in this chapter) went up from the cherubim. This implies that it rested upon these two angelic beings though the number isn't given, two from those which were fashioned to be placed upon the ark of the covenant. We have here what seems to be a hovering motion, for the *kavod* next moves to the temple's threshold or entrance filling the house with the cloud. As for the court or *chaser* (cf. vs. 3), it was filled with brightness emanating from the *kavod*, *nogah* implying splendor as in 1.28. So we have two opposites, if you will, cloud and brightness, both the same in the sense that they blocked vision.

Vs. 5 describes the loud sound of the cherubims' wings heard in the outer court, *chaser* again with *chytson* (outer) which implies an area which is not holy in and by itself but partaking of it by reason of its proximity. "Then he brought me into the outer court" [40.17]. Ezekiel likens this sound or *qol* (cf. 3.13) also as voice) not just to the Lord but the Lord Almighty when he speaks, "Almighty" or *Shady* (cf. 1.24) adding a more majestic element to the *qol*. This hearkens back to the vision of the throne chariot in 1.24, *qol* there being associated with a tumult or *hamulah*. As for the speaking the verb *davar* is prefaced with the preposition *b-* or "in," intimating that the Lord is in his *davar* or in his expressing of himself.

If the wings of the cherubim made such a *qol* resembling the Lord Almighty, the area between (*mibeynoth*) the cherubim mentioned in vs. 6 is relatively quiet since this *qol* is directed outward. Again keep in mind that the two heavenly beings are situated on top of the ark of the Lord with wings spread over it for protection. Note, too, that the cherubim aren't mentioned in Ezekiel's first vision but the so-called four living creatures (cf. 1.5). Now the Lord bids the man clothed in linen to take fire from between (*mibeynoth*) the whirling wheels or *galgal* (cf. vs. 2). So we have two in-betweens which the scribe must negotiate beginning by standing beside one of the four wheels. For him it's a risky business, but then again, he just finished marking people who are destined to survive the slaughter within Jerusalem. He figured that anything to follow would pale in comparison.

To the scribe's astonishment, in vs. 7 a cherub from between (*benoth*) his fellow cherubim stretched a hand out to the fire, took part of it and put it in the man's hand. After this he promptly exited the whirling wheels. Nothing is said of a container for this fire; as intimated earlier, it was of such a nature that the man could handle it with his bare hands. Next in vs. 8 the observation is made that the two cherubim (again that number isn't specified but presumed from the ark of the Lord) to have the form of a human hand, *tavnyth* being the noun for form (cf. 8.3) which fundamentally means a structure as well as image or exemplar. Ezekiel couldn't help but compare this incident with his illustrious predecessor, the prophet Isaiah. He had a vision at the beginning of his ministry which consisted of six seraphim, six-winged angelic beings different from their cousins, the cherubim. If one of these seraphim touched Isaiah's mouth with a live coal and did not harm him, surely the scribe came away unscathed as he bore the fire without a container.

Vs. 9 has Ezekiel looking and beholding, *ra'ah* and *hineh* (cf. vs. 1) which indicates a new phase of this vision. Part of it consists in wondering what happened to the scribe clothed in linen or more specifically, what he was going to do with the fire. Jerusalem

had been pretty much wiped out. Such fire taken from a holy place may be intended not so much to destroy the city but to purify it. This is to be done after the scribe fills his hand with burning coals and scatters them over Jerusalem (cf. vs. 2). Between vs. 9 and vs. 14 we have a fairly detailed description of the wheels, there being four of them. Thus their description may be outlined as follows:

-Four wheels (*'ophan*, cf. 3.13), not *galgal* or the whirling wheels beside each of the cherubim, their appearance or *mar'eh* (cf. 8.4) being as chrysolite which sparkles. *Heyn* is a noun commonly translated as eye and is used for the adjective “sparkling,” reading literally as “the eye of chrysolite” found in 1.16 or Ezekiel’s vision of the throne chariot.

-As for the appearance of the cherubim or *mar'eh*, they had the likeness as a wheel within a wheel, *demuth* suggesting more a form as in vs. 1. So here in vs. 10 we have the cherubim with both the same *mar'eh* and *demuth*. The preposition *betok*, more as in the center of, is used with regard to the wheels, *'ophan*. Thus the idea is a wheel physically located within another wheel while the two remain the same.

-It seems that the cherubim are the direct guiding force of this vision as clearly distinct from the throne chariot in Chapter One. As vs. 3 recounts, the closest thing it resembles is a cloud, that is, one on wheels. Vs. 11 says that these heavenly beings went in any of the four directions or *revah* (cf. 1.17 but not noted there) which translates more accurately as sides. Once a particular direction is chosen, the cherubim/cloud follows it without swerving, the front wheel leading the way. This front wheel intimates that the other three are set back some bit which not necessarily affects the shape.

-The RSV of vs. 12 reads “And their rims” whereas the Hebrew runs as “and their whole body and.” This is followed immediately by “and their spokes” for “of life,” these variations most likely a certain corruption of the text. In the same verse the wheels or *'ophan* are full of eyes all around, that is, each of the four wheels belonging to each of the four cherubim. Automatically this brings to mind God’s throne depicted in Rev 4.8: “And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all round and within, and day and night they never cease to sing, ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!’”

-Ezekiel interjects an observation at this point (vs. 13), that is, these wheels (*'ophan*) were called whirling wheels (*galgal*) literally in his ears. In other words, they have a kind of high-pitched sound due to the rapid whirling.

-The last observation concerning this cherubim/cloud vision in vs. 14 describes the cherubim as having four different faces: cherub, man, lion and eagle. This harkens back to the verse before the previous one in Revelation cited just above, that is, 4.7: “The first living creature like a lion, the second living creature

like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle.” The difference is that Revelation has an ox for a cherub.

Now that the driving mechanism of cherubim/cloud has been described, from vs. 15 through the end of this chapter we see it departing the temple, a very sad sight to behold. In other words, the ark of the Lord is leaving its home in Jerusalem, the verb *ramam* meaning to be high or lofty and found next in vs. 17. Once airborne, if you will, Ezekiel recognizes that the cherubim are the same as the living creatures of his first vision by the Chebar, that “stormy wind that came out of the north” in 1.4. Nothing is said about how he made the transition from these creatures to cherubim; perhaps through the medium of the man clothed in linen.

In vs. 16 both cherubim and the wheels departed as one, these heavenly beings using their wings to mount on high. Then in vs. 17 Ezekiel observes that the cherubim first stands still, presumably being suspended for a moment in the air above Jerusalem almost wanting to go back, yet they continued to ascend. This is possible by reason of the spirit (the RSV has lower case ‘r’) or *ruach* which is not like the cloud associated with the cherubim though it isn’t mentioned after vs. 4. Here the Hebrew text reads literally, “for the spirit of the life was in them.”

So here we are with the cherubim/cloud hovering over Jerusalem and gazed upon those righteous people marked by the scribe, no one else. As noted earlier, some may have remained in the city while others fled. Nevertheless, all couldn’t help but be transfixed by the sight. They paused, waiting for the divine *kavod* or glory (cf. vs. 4) to leave the threshold of the house or temple after which it stood above the cherubim. Note reference to threshold, as if the *kavod* were impatient to get out of that place and ascend to its proper dwelling. Vs. 19 recounts the cherubim mounted up from the earth with the wheels after which they stood at the east gate of the temple. Compare this with vs. 15, “And the cherubim mounted up,” the mounting in vs. 19 seeming to be a second but is associated with being done “in my (Ezekiel) sight.”

In the last verse of this chapter Ezekiel sees clearly that the living creatures by the river Chebar and the cherubim are one and the same. Then in the remaining verses he speaks briefly of the faces of the cherubim, pretty much to confirm at this point of the Lord’s departure from Jerusalem that what he had witnessed was genuine.

Son of man: 0

Davar of the Lord: 0

Thus says the Lord: 0

1) ra'ah, hineh, saphyr, raqyah, demuth, 2) galgal, zaraq, 3) bayth, chaser, 4) kavod, chaser, nogah, 5) qol, chytson, shady, 6) galgal, 8) tavnyth, 9) ra'ah, hineh, 'ophan, mar'eh, heyn, 10) mar'eh, demuth, betok, 'ophan, 11) revah, 13) 'ophan, galgal, 15) ramam, 17) ruach, 18) kavod

Chapter Eleven

1) The Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the east gate of the house of the Lord which faces east. And behold, at the door of the gateway there were twenty-five men; and I saw among them Ja-azaniah the son of Azzur and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people. 2) And he said to me, "**Son of man**, these are the men who devise iniquity and who give wicked counsel in this city; 3) who say, 'The time is not near to build houses; this city is the caldron, and we are the flesh.' 4) Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O **son of man**." 5) And the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and he said to me, "Say, **Thus says the Lord**: So you think, O house of Israel; for I know the things that come into your mind. 6) You have multiplied your slain in this city and have filled its streets with the slain. 7) Therefore **thus says the Lord God**: Your slain whom you have laid in the midst of it, they are the flesh, and this city is the caldron; but you shall be brought forth out of the midst of it. 8) You have feared the sword; and I will bring the sword upon you, says the Lord God. 9) And I will bring you forth out of the midst of it and give you into the hands of foreigners and execute judgments upon you. 10) You shall fall by the sword; I will judge you at the border of Israel; and you shall know that I am the Lord. 11) This city shall not be your caldron, nor shall you be the flesh in the midst of it; I will judge you at the border of Israel; 12) and you shall know that I am the Lord; for you have not walked in my statutes nor executed my ordinances but have acted according to the ordinances of the nations that are round about you." 13) And it came to pass while I was prophesying that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then I fell down upon my face and cried with a loud voice and said, "Ah Lord God! will you make a full end of the remnant of Israel?" 14) And the **word of the Lord** came to me: 15) "**Son of man**, your brethren, even your brethren, your fellow exiles, the whole house of Israel, all of them, are those of whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, 'They have gone far from the Lord; to us this land is given for a possession.' 16) Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord God: Though I removed them far off among the nations, and though I scattered them among the countries, yet I have been a sanctuary to them for a while in the countries where they have gone.' 17) Therefore say, '**Thus says the Lord God**: I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.' 18) And when they come there, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations. 19) And I will give them one heart and put a new spirit within them; I will 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 ordinances and obey them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. 21) But as for those whose heart goes after their detestable things and their abominations, I will requite their deeds upon their

own heads, says the Lord God." 22) Then the cherubim lifted up their wings with the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them. 23) And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city. 24) And the Spirit lifted me up and brought me in the vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to the exiles. Then the vision that I had seen went up from me. 25) And I told the exiles all the things that the Lord had showed me.

As noted a number of times earlier, the conjunctive *v-* plays an important role to connect what had just happened with what is about to happen, and here has no English translation. As a footnote in the RSV says, "these verses should follow 8.18" because they come before the destruction of Jerusalem. In light of this, we could intimate that when the Spirit (*ruach*, cf. 10.17) lifts up Ezekiel (compare with being lifted by the lock of his hair in 8.3), it's done by going back in time. The Spirit isn't bound by such restrictions, so he's free to take Ezekiel anywhere he wishes.

The destination for Ezekiel? The east gate of the Lord's temple which, as often is the case, is called "house" as a way to designate a certain familiarity with Israel and now is in the unfortunate process of being forsaken. So when the Spirit brings the prophet to the gateway facing east—he doesn't necessarily let him down but keeps him suspended—he beholds (*hineh*, cf. 10.9) a considerably large group of twenty-five men. He singles out two among them as princes or *sar* of the people although they aren't mentioned elsewhere. "Behold, the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and took her king and her princes and brought them to him to Babylon" [17.12].

Although Ezekiel singles out Ja-azaniah and Pelatiah by reason of their leadership roles, he must have known the others and intimates instinctively that they were conspiring something which wasn't good. The entire group must have sought control over Jerusalem at one time or another yet fortunately had been caught before they could achieve their goal. Now these conspirators decided to do their thing in a place least expected, within the temple...the home...of the Lord.

The Spirit confirms what Ezekiel had known from the moment he laid eyes upon these men, namely, that they are devising iniquity and wicked counsel in Jerusalem. *Chashav* is the verb for devising which also means to think out something or to impute. It's used with the noun '*aven*, also as emptiness or vanity. Their references are respectively: "And you will devise an evil scheme" [38.10]. "The young men of On (i.e., '*Aven*) and of Pibeseth shall fall by the sword" [30.17]. As for the counsel which is wicked or *rah* (cf. 8.9), the noun is *hetsah* (cf. 7.25) with the verb (participle) from which it's derived, *yahats*, as in Mic 4.9: "Has your counselor perished?"

Vs. 3 gives some details as to this plot, namely, that they are attempting to assure Jerusalem's inhabitants of their security and continue with building projects despite (as a footnote in the RSV says) the plot between Egypt and king Zedekiah's pro-Egyptian counselors against Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon. They put this false reassurance in terms of a rhetorical sentence (that is, in the Hebrew), "Is not the time near?" In the same breath the conspirators acknowledge that Jerusalem is a caldron (*syr*) or a pot for boiling and found next in vs. 11. Into this boiling pot they are destined to be cast. This moves the Spirit to have Ezekiel prophesy against them (*navy*?, cf. 6.1) which he does in the following verses. In order to carry it out, the Spirit must drop Ezekiel in the midst of these twenty-five conspirators. It's a risky maneuver since easily they could do away with him.

Chapter Eleven begins with the Spirit lifting up Ezekiel whereas vs. 5 has the same Spirit doing the opposite, that is, falling upon him, *naphal* (cf. 8.1). Such falling is a prelude to uttering a prophesy or the like. Here the verb 'amar (not the more fuller *davar*, if you will) for to speak is used three times in rapid succession: said, say and thus says. A fourth instance can be thrown in translated as "so you think" rendered literally as "so you say." Despite this, the Lord (through Ezekiel, of course) knows what Israel had been up to, the verb *yadah* being used along with *ruach*, the lower case use compared with the upper case one or the Spirit.

The words of prophesy (this term isn't used explicitly) continues through vs. 12 with reference to the evil the twenty-five men had committed under the leadership of the two princes mentioned in vs. 1. They are responsible for having multiplied the slain within Jerusalem, *ravah* being the verb in vs. 6. "They have made many widows in her" [22.25]. Corresponding with this *ravah* is *mala*' (cf. 10.4 but not noted there) or filling the streets with dead bodies. These corpses are the flesh within the walls of Jerusalem which form a caldron. However, the conspirators aren't to be consumed within it but are to be brought outside (*betok* with *min* prefaced to it; cf. 10.10) or from its midst or very center.

In sharp contrast to the just mentioned *betok* is the sword in vs. 8 awaiting these twenty-five men, that is, falling into the hands of foreigners or *zur* (cf. 7.21 but not noted there), a participle which also means enemy. They are to pass judgement, *shaphat* (cf. 7.8) which is in line with the Lord himself doing the same *shaphat* (cf. vs. 10), more specifically at the border of Israel or where this *gevul* (cf. vs. 11) rubs up against territory controlled by Babylon. And so *gevul* forms a larger caldron, if you will, compared with the smaller one of Jerusalem. To be slain there is a worse

fate than within Jerusalem, hence the significance of *betok* with *min* (“from the midst of”) prefaced to it as noted concerning vs. 7. If there is any last minute redemption, it consists in the fact that these conspirators will know (*yadah*, cf. vs. 5) the Lord.

Vs. 12 is a continuation of the previous verse which again speaks of the conspirators knowing (*yadah*) that the Lord is in charge. Following this *yadah* is the imputation of not following divine statutes or ordinances, *choq* and *mishpat* (cf. 7.27). For the former, cf. 16.27: “And diminished your allotted portion.” Instead of these, they have followed the *mishpat* of the nations around Israel, hence the reason for the Lord bringing the conspirators to Israel’s boundaries.

Vs. 13 shifts gears from the fate of these twenty-five men to Ezekiel lamenting the death of Pelatiah, that is, while he was finishing up his prophesy against them. As noted in vs. 1, he is one of the two princes among the twenty-five conspirators. Ezekiel gets quite emotional over his death, possibly because he had known him before he fell into apostasy. Then he blurts out to the Lord about making a full end to what is left of Israel, *kalah*. “And great hailstones in wrath to destroy it” [13.13]. As for this remnant or *sh’eryth* (cf. 9.8 but not noted there), most likely it hearkens back to those marked by the man clothed in linen “who sigh and groan over all the abominations” [9.4] committed in Jerusalem. Again, the number of that remnant isn’t given but left to the reader to presume, mostly likely being quite small.

Vs. 14 is succinct, opening with the conjunctive *v-*, “and the word (*davar*) of the Lord came to me,” this phrase being found last in 7.1. In the verse at hand the *davar* comes to Ezekiel after he mourns the death of Pelatiah or more specifically, the complete destruction of Israel for all its abominable practices. The *davar* to be proclaimed is detailed through vs. 21, a good chunk of Chapter Eleven. It begins with the biting tone of “your brethren, even your brethren” which must have embarrassed Ezekiel at being associated with such people although by now he is very familiar with the Israel’s apostasy.

Ezekiel is referring to Israel not as the northern kingdom that split off from the Judah or southern kingdom after Solomon's death but as the entire people of God. From that point of view the Jews are the remnant of Israel. Ezekiel wants to know if God is going to destroy his entire ancient people and replies that he and his fellow Jews in exile are being maligned by those who still live in Jerusalem. They claim that they are far away from the Lord by reason of living in Babylon, so now God is going to give all the Promised land to them. In fact as God will show Ezekiel, it will be the exact opposite. The exiles will return and inherit the land and those in Jerusalem will

be killed or scattered.

Note that one of the ways Ezekiel is identified with his fellows is by the phrase “your fellow exiles” which reads literally and more pertinently as “men of redemption,” *ge’ulah*, this term having a number of references in Chapter Twenty-Five of Leviticus beginning with 25.24: “And in all the country you possess, you shall grant a redemption of the land.” In sum, we have expression of a strain between two groups, those left in Jerusalem and those in exile. As for those in Jerusalem, they say that the land has been given them as a possession, *morashah* implying inheritance. “I am handing you over to the people of the East for a possession” [25.4]. They come up with an excuse by claiming that those in Jerusalem have strayed far from the Lord, *rachaq* (cf. 8.6 but not noted there). To this the Lord bids Ezekiel to respond in vs. 16 where the Lord claims that he was a sanctuary in lands to which they had been scattered, *miqdash* (cf. 9.5). The English text reads “sanctuary to them for a while” whereas the Hebrew runs “in small measure.” Perhaps this is because the *miqdash* of exile is less than the *miqdash* or temple in Jerusalem, center of Jewish worship.

Vs. 17 begins with “thus says the Lord God” right after the same phrase in vs. 16 possibly due to the importance of what he has to communicate. The Lord will first gather then assemble the Israelites, *qavats* and *‘asaph* being two similar verbs. The first literally means to grasp by the hand or to gather and the second, to collect or to gather up. For references: the first is noted last in 10.1 but not noted there while the second may be found in 24.4: “Put in it the pieces of flesh.” The first is associated with the peoples or those who are not Israelites while the second, countries in which Israel had been scattered, *puts* also found in vs. 16 with reference to countries. Note that Israel is called land or *‘adamah* (cf. 7.2) which pertains more to the physical place while countries are *ham*, a word associated with people or nation. Given the situation of exile, *‘adamah* is far more important because it signifies the place of return.

Vs. 18 has the exiles arriving back home where they will remove all detestable things and abominations, *shiquts* and *tohevah*, both found together in 8.20. This they must do on their own which is followed by a specific divine intervention. That is to say, vs. 19 has the Lord step in order to give the people literally “one heart” (*lev*, cf. 6.9), emphasis upon one in that it will be essential to eradicate the presence of multiple deities in their native land of Israel. In addition to this, the Lord will give a new spirit or new *ruach* (cf. vs. 5) within the people, *qerev* meaning the interior or midst of anything. Compare with *betok* which is more around the middle of something or among. Both this one heart and new spirit (*lev* and *ruach*) will replace their stony

heart for one of flesh. Note that nothing is said of replacing the *ruach*.

Vs. 20 says that the purpose of this twofold surgery, if you will, is for Israel to walk in the Lord's statutes and ordinances, *choq* and *mishpat*, as found in vs. 12 where they had not done so. The first are to be kept (*shamar*) and the second to be obeyed (*hasah*, the common verb to do). A reference to the former which implies keeping watch is 20.18: "Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers nor observe their ordinance." This *shamar* and *hasah*...keeping watch and doing...automatically results in Israel belonging to the Lord and he being their God which is rendered literally as "to (*l-*) God."

Vs. 21 reads in Hebrew as pointed out by the RSV, "To the heart of their detestable things and their abominations their heart goes." The noun *derek* (road, way) is used here most likely as "things." This condemnation applies to those who are not part of the exile. Dealing with them is an important requisite for the exiles to return and reestablish true worship of the Lord. If they aren't eliminated, the problem is bound to continue.

So after closing on both a hopeful and threatening note, the cherubim and the *kavod* (cf. 10.18) or glory of the Lord over them depart. More specifically, this *kavod* ascends from the midst of (*mehal tok* or from on midst) Jerusalem and takes position on the mountain east of the city, that is, the Mount of Olives. From there it seems to pause, even linger for some time, as the Lord with his cherubim take in one last sight of Jerusalem. For a human correspondence of this, refer to King David when he had to flee his son Absalom (cf. 2Sam 16.1+). As for what the Lord did afterwards, nothing is said after this, the picture intended to leave us in suspense.

Attention now shifts to Ezekiel in vs. 24 when the Spirit (*Ruach*, cf. vs. 19) lifts him up and brings him in vision or *mar'eh* (cf. 10.10) not simply by the Spirit by the Spirit of God. This hearkens back to 8.3 when the same Spirit "brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem." In other words, the vision of Israel's eventual restoration is complete and needs to be communicated to the exiles in Babylon which here is designated as Chaldea. Once there, this vision went up from Ezekiel after which he recounted everything that the Lord had shown him. Nothing is said of their response, but any ray of hope would be most welcome despite their relatively benign treatment in Babylon.

Son of man: 3

Davar of the Lord: 1

Thus says the Lord: 5

1) ruach, hineh, sar, 2) chashav, 'aven, rah, yahats, 3) syr, 4) navy', 5) naphal, yadah, ruach, 6) ravah, mala', 7) betok, 9) zur, shaphat, 10) shaphat, gevul, 11) yadah, 12) choq, mishpat, 13) kalah, sh'eryh, 15) ge'ulah, rashaq, morashah, 16) miqdash, 17) qavats, 'asaph, naphats, puts, 'adamah, 18) shiquts, tohevah, 19) lev, ruach, qerev, 20) choq, mishpat, shamar, hasah, 21) derek, 22) kavod, 24) ruach, mar'eh

Chapter Twelve

1) The **word of the Lord** came to me: 2) "**Son of man**, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house who have eyes to see but see not, who have ears to hear but hear not; 3) for they are a rebellious house. Therefore, **son of man**, prepare for yourself an exile's baggage and go into exile by day in their sight; you shall go like an exile from your place to another place in their sight. Perhaps they will understand though they are a rebellious house. 4) You shall bring out your baggage by day in their sight as baggage for exile; and you shall go forth yourself at evening in their sight as men do who must go into exile. 5) Dig through the wall in their sight and go out through it. 6) In their sight you shall lift the baggage upon your shoulder and carry it out in the dark; you shall cover your face that you may not see the land; for I have made you a sign for the house of Israel." 7) And I did as I was commanded. I brought out my baggage by day as baggage for exile, and in the evening I dug through the wall with my own hands; I went forth in the dark carrying my outfit upon my shoulder in their sight. 8) In the morning the **word of the Lord** came to me: 9) "**Son of man**, has not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said to you, 'What are you doing?' 10) Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: This oracle concerns the prince in Jerusalem and all the house of Israel who are in it.' 11) Say, 'I am a sign for you: as I have done, so shall it be done to them; they shall go into exile, into captivity.' 12) And the prince who is among them shall lift his baggage upon his shoulder in the dark and shall go forth; he shall dig through the wall and go out through it; he shall cover his face that he may not see the land with his eyes. 13) And I will spread my net over him, and he shall be taken in my snare; and I will bring him to Babylon in the land of the Chaldeans, yet he shall not see it; and he shall die there. 14) And I will scatter toward every wind all who are round about him, his helpers and all his troops; and I will unsheathe the sword after them. 15) And they shall know that I am the Lord when I disperse them among the nations and scatter them through the countries. 16) But I will let a few of them escape from the sword, from famine and pestilence, that they may confess all their abominations among the nations where they go and may know that I am the Lord." 17) Moreover the **word of the Lord** came to me: 18) "**Son of man**, eat your bread with quaking and drink water with trembling and with fearfulness; 19) and say of the people of the land, **Thus says the Lord** God concerning the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the land of Israel: They shall eat their bread with fearfulness and drink water in dismay because their land will be stripped of all it contains on account of the violence of all those who dwell in it. 20) And the inhabited cities shall be laid waste, and the land shall become a desolation; and you shall

know that I am the Lord." 21) And the **word of the Lord** came to me: 22) "**Son of man**, what is this proverb that you have about the land of Israel, saying, 'The days grow long, and every vision comes to nought'? 23) Tell them therefore, 'Thus says the Lord God: I will put an end to this proverb, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel.' But say to them, 'The days are at hand and the fulfilment of every vision. 24) For there shall be no more any false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel. 25) But I the Lord will speak the word which I will speak, and it will be performed. It will no longer be delayed, but in your days, O rebellious house, I will speak the word and perform it, says the Lord God.'" 26) Again the **word of the Lord** came to me: 27) "**Son of man**, behold, they of the house of Israel say, 'The vision that he sees is for many days hence, and he prophesies of times far off.' 28) Therefore say to them, **Thus says the Lord God**: None of my words will be delayed any longer, but the word which I speak will be performed, says the Lord God."

“Word (*davar*) of the Lord” is prefaced with the conjunctive *v-*, this phrase being mentioned last in 11.14 and in the verse at hand, lacks the verb “came.” In other words, the Hebrew reads literally “and the *davar* of the Lord was to me.” There’s a certain tongue-in-cheek humor to vs. 2 when the Lord says that he dwells in the midst or very middle of (*betok*, cf. 11.7) Israel which is described as a rebellious house throughout Chapter Twelve. Humorous in the sense that Ezekiel must have shot back at the Lord with something like “Really?” In other words, he had known this from the very beginning of his ministry. How could anyone with some sense could not? As for the phrase “son of man,” it’s found six times in this chapter.

The phrase “rebellious house” is found five times in Chapter Two, *mery* being the adjective as in 2.8, so early on Ezekiel got a cram course on Israel being in this degenerate condition. Also mention of “house” with regard to Israel intimates something domestic, of taking place within a confined building, making it all the more contentious. Then add the just mentioned *betok* or very center along with Ezekiel dwelling there, and you really have an undesirable situation. As for the dwellers there, they have eyes and ears but can neither see nor hear, this being reminiscent of Is 6.10: “Make the heart of this people fat and their ears heavy and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts and turn and be healed.”

Vs. 3 is a continuation of the sentence begun in the previous verse, starting off with another mention of Israel as a rebellious house, again, this being for emphasis. This verse contains a second sentence where the Lord tells Ezekiel as “son of man” (second reference) to prepare baggage in the manner of someone going into exile or *galah* also meaning captivity as the following shows: “And the nations shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity” [39.23]. You’d think

that setting out under the cover of dark is best for this. However, the Lord bids Ezekiel to do it in broad daylight, more specifically as “in their sight” so no one of the entire house of Israel will miss the spectacle.

As for the place of exile, that’s not mentioned, again to make put the Israelites on edge. Which enemy will come and destroy our city, leading us into captivity? That’s the feeling Ezekiel wishes to impart. However, the Lord holds out some hope, albeit slim, that the people just might understand, *ra’ah* (cf. 10.9) being the verb which means to see. Use of *ra’ah* is somewhat ironic in that just a few verses above it’s used with “eyes to see but see not.” While everyone marveled at the strange behavior of Ezekiel (some would say it forebodes an invasion but never could say so publically), they did not *ra’ah* it; more importantly, they failed to *ra’ah* that they were a rebellious house.

In order to make this gesture more dramatic, in vs. 4 the Lord bids Ezekiel to bring out his baggage in full daylight which means he had to walk from his house through the streets of Jerusalem to the city wall. While vs. 3 says that the prophet is to go into exile during the day, vs. 6 has him carrying out his baggage in the dark. So it seems the preparation was done during daylight hours, deliberately drawn out to strike fear into the people, while the actual act of leaving through the wall was at night. Then again, in light of what comes later in this chapter concerning the unfulfilled prophecies of Jeremiah, most people simply looked the other way. So while making good his exit, Ezekiel is to cover his face so as not to see the land. He did this because the land is polluted with abominations, this gesture being a sign or *mopheth* (cf. vs. 11) for Israel, the noun also applicable to a miracle or proof. While the crowd grew throughout the day, by night virtually all Jerusalem’s inhabitants had gathered around Ezekiel, torches and other means of illumination filling the area.

In vs. 7 Ezekiel says that he carried out what the Lord bade him to do and exited through the wall under the cover of darkness. Then he disappeared into the night to a place he had no idea to which he was going. All those in Jerusalem who had huddled around him certainly wondered the same. We can be sure of one thing, namely, no one, absolutely no one, dared to follow. However, people were attentive to any bit of information that might trickle in the next few days.

Vs. 8 backs up a bit the sequence of events by referring to the morning of Ezekiel’s very public departure through the wall of Jerusalem. During that time the *davar* of the Lord came to him, possibly within his house before making a public display of his departure. For the third time the Lord addresses him as “son of man,” this occasion

being the people wondering what his public gesture is all about. People living in walled towns naturally get nervous when it comes to any intimation of their vulnerability as through a siege, so obviously Ezekiel had put them on edge. If his prophesying won't convert them, surely an invasion would do the trick.

In vs. 10 the Lord tells Ezekiel what he is to say to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, again that “rebellious house,” many of whom already were gathering outside his door waiting for him to make his way to the wall. If they or at least a few of them realized their rebellious nature, there just might be some hope. However, prospects for that, already dim, now have disappeared. What Ezekiel is about to say pertains more specifically to the prince in Jerusalem commonly accepted as King Zedekiah; included, of course, is the house of Israel, he being its head. The Hebrew text reads for “who are in it” “in the midst (*betok*, cf. vs. 1) of them.” As for the king, most likely he didn't go out to watch Ezekiel pass through the wall. That would have meant conceding to the prophet as well as sending shivers throughout the population. Nevertheless, he must have sent out spies in order to report back to him.

Ezekiel is a sign or *mopheth* (cf. vs. 6) for Israel as well as for King Zedekiah which he states clearly as the city's future going into exile which also means captivity, *shevy*. “And the women shall go into captivity” [30.17]. Then he continues with mention of King Zedekiah though not by name, but everyone knows whom he is talking about. However, the king is destined to be captured and led off to Babylon which he won't see because as punishment he will be blinded. In addition to this the Lord will scatter to the four winds Zedekiah's entourage, *zarah* (cf. 5.12) being the verb.

Despite this terrible fate in store for Jerusalem's elite, the Lord adds it's for them to realize that he is the Lord, that all-important *yadah* which transcends everything else. As for *zarah*, a comparable verb in vs. 15 is *puts* (cf. 11.17) or disperse with respect to these officials among nations and thus effectively lost forever.

Nevertheless, the Lord decides to leave a few survivors behind, that is, to escape the sword, famine and pestilence, the last two being a result of Jerusalem's destruction. The identity or number of such persons isn't given which is incidental. What counts is that they will confess or *saphar* their abominations (*tohevah*, cf. 11.18) among the nations and know (*yadah* again) that God is the Lord. The verb *saphar* (cf. 9.3 but not noted there) fundamentally means to inscribe or write down implying that these survivors will not only speak of the evil they had done but will produce an enduring written record of their misdeeds. If this comes off right, the nations to which the survivors had come will be converted and set an example for the native inhabitants of both Jerusalem and Israel.

In vs. 17 the *davar* of the Lord comes again to Ezekiel or later in the day, the last occurrence being quite recently or that morning (cf. vs. 8). Now Ezekiel is to eat and drink with quaking, trembling and fear or *rahash* (cf. 3.12), *ragzah* (only use of this term in the Bible) and *d'agah* (cf. 4.16 but not noted there). With everyone surrounding him and waiting for his next move, Ezekiel is to say of Jerusalem's inhabitants that like him, they are to eat and drink with fearfulness and dismay, *d'agah* and *shimamon*, the latter being the only use of this term in the Bible. The reason? The land is destined to be stripped of virtually everything because of the violence found in it, *chamas* (cf. 8.17). It seems that their evil deeds will sink down and pollute the very soil.

Furthermore, other cities and towns will suffer the same fate as Jerusalem, that is, be laid waste, *charav* (cf. 6.6 but not noted there) meaning to be dried up. As for the land or rest of Israel, it will become a desolation or *shemamah* (cf. 6.14), a noun akin to *shimamon* of vs. 19. Yet again, this is done that the survivors...and they must be very few, given the devastation being described...are to know the Lord, *yadah*. Such is the price to be paid for this knowledge which is beyond anything Ezekiel or his fellow Israelites could conceive.

Vs. 21 has the *davar* of the Lord coming to Ezekiel the fourth time, here calling him "son of man" for the next-to-last time. He inquires about a proverb or *mashal* (cf. vs. 22) which concerns not just Israel but its land or *'adamah* (cf. 11.17). Reference to the days growing long intimates the extended period of the prophet Jeremiah's foretelling the fall of Jerusalem which had not happened. It was not uncommon for the people not to pay attention, something Ezekiel needed to heed with his own prophecy. As for this prophecy intimated in the proverb at hand, every vision doesn't come to fruition, *chazon* (cf. 7.26) being the noun.

In vs. 23 the Lord claims that he will do away with the proverb mentioned in the previous verse, the verb being *shavath* (cf. 7.24 but not noted there) and *mashal* also used as a verb. He will effect it by bring about the long-neglected prophecy of Ezekiel's predecessor, Jeremiah. Now the days are near (*qarav*, cf. 9.1) of fulfilment are at hand along with the fulfilment of every vision or *chazon* as in the previous verse. The noun *davar*...word-as-expression...is used for fulfilment.

Vs. 24 continues with this long awaited fulfilment of a thirty year old prophecy, namely, that no longer will there be any false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel, that is, *betok* (cf. vs. 10) or within its very center. That is, we

have here a *chazon* which is *shav'*, a noun meaning vanity or consisting of lies or deception. "They have spoken falsehood and divined a lie" [13.6]. *Miqsam* means divination and has one other biblical reference, 13.7: "Have you not seen a delusive vision and uttered a lying divination?" In the verse at hand, such a *miqsam* is modified by the adjective *chalaq* meaning to be smooth. "A lying tongue hates its victims, and a flattering mouth works in ruin" [Prov 26.28].

Vs. 25 reveals the Lord's determination to bring about what he wishes against Israel as a rebellious house. That is to say, he will *davar* a *davar* which will come to fruition. Usually something like this isn't said because a *davar* by its very nature is bound up with fulfilling what the Lord wishes. Thus the verb *hasah* (to do, cf. 11.20) is added more for emphasis though from the Lord's point of view, it doesn't have be such. To delay this *davar* is simply impossible, *mashak* being the verb which implies a drawing out and is found next in vs. 28.

Vs. 26 has the final instance in this chapter of the *davar* of the Lord coming to Ezekiel followed by the equally last occasion of "son of man." When the Israelites heard the prophet's message (Jeremiah may be included as well) they claim that his vision or *chazon* (cf. vs. 23) won't come true for many days which goes against what the Lord says in vs. 25, "It (*davar*) will no longer be delayed, but in your days, O rebellious house, I will *davar* the *davar* and perform it." The same applies to his prophecies which by now they have come to scorn. Even when vs. 28 has the Lord saying through Ezekiel that his *davar* won't be delayed (*mashak*), the current *davar* which he will *davar* will come to pass, the verb *hasah* being used as in vs. 25. Thus towards the end of Chapter Twelve the Lord crowds in a whole bunch of *davar* in response to Israel having lost faith in his prophecies through Jeremiah and then Ezekiel.

Son of man: 6

Davar of the Lord: 5

Thus says the Lord: 4

1) betok, 2) mery, 3) ra'ah, 4) galah, 6) mopheth, 10) betok, 11) mopheth, 14) zarah, 15) puts, yadah, 16) saphar, tohevah, yadah, 18) rahash, ragzah, d'agah, 19) d'agah, shimamon, chamas, 20) charav, shemamah, yadah, 22) mashal, 'adamah, chazon, 23) shavath, mashal, qarav, chazon, 24) betok, chazon, shav', miqsam, chalaq, 25) hasah, mashak, 26) chazon, 28) mashak

Chapter Thirteen

1) **The word of the Lord** came to me: 2) "**Son of man**, prophesy against the prophets of Israel, prophesy and say to those who prophesy out of their own minds: `Hear **the word of the Lord!**" 3) **Thus says the Lord God**, Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! 4) Your prophets have been like foxes among ruins, O Israel. 5) You have not gone up into the breaches or built up a wall for the house of Israel that it might stand in battle in the day of the Lord. 6) They have spoken falsehood and divined a lie; they say, `Says the Lord,' when the Lord has not sent them, and yet they expect him to fulfil their word. 7) Have you not seen a delusive vision and uttered a lying divination whenever you have said, `Says the Lord,' although I have not spoken?" 8) Therefore **thus says the Lord God**: "Because you have uttered delusions and seen lies, therefore behold, I am against you, says the Lord God. 9) My hand will be against the prophets who see delusive visions and who give lying divinations; they shall not be in the council of my people nor be enrolled in the register of the house of Israel nor shall they enter the land of Israel; and you shall know that I am the Lord God. 10) Because, yea, because they have misled my people, saying, `Peace,' when there is no peace; and because, when the people build a wall, these prophets daub it with whitewash; 11) say to those who daub it with whitewash that it shall fall! There will be a deluge of rain, great hailstones will fall, and a stormy wind break out; 12) and when the wall falls, will it not be said to you, `Where is the daubing with which you daubed it?' 13) Therefore **thus says the Lord God**: I will make a stormy wind break out in my wrath; and there shall be a deluge of rain in my anger and great hailstones in wrath to destroy it. 14) And I will break down the wall that you have daubed with whitewash and bring it down to the ground so that its foundation will be laid bare; when it falls, you shall perish in the midst of it; and you shall know that I am the Lord. 15) Thus will I spend my wrath upon the wall and upon those who have daubed it with whitewash; and I will say to you, The wall is no more nor those who daubed it, 16) the prophets of Israel who prophesied concerning Jerusalem and saw visions of peace for her when there was no peace, says the Lord God. 17) "And you, **son of man**, set your face against the daughters of your people who prophesy out of their own minds; prophesy against them 18) and say, **Thus says the Lord God**: Woe to the women who sew magic bands upon all wrists and make veils for the heads of persons of every stature in the hunt for souls! Will you hunt down souls belonging to my people and keep other souls alive for your profit? 19) You have profaned me among my people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, putting to death persons who should not die and keeping alive persons who should not live by your lies to my people who listen to lies. 20) "Wherefore **thus says the Lord God**: Behold, I am against your magic bands with which you hunt the souls, and I will tear them from your arms; and I will let the souls that you hunt go free like birds. 21) Your veils also I will tear off and deliver my people out of your hand, and they shall be no more in your hand as prey; and you shall know that I am the Lord. 22) Because you have disheartened the righteous falsely, although I have not disheartened him, and you have encouraged the wicked that he should not turn from his wicked way to save his life; 23) therefore you shall no more see delusive visions nor practice divination; I will deliver my people out of your hand. Then you will know that I am the Lord."

This new chapter begins with the conjunctive *v-* as “and,” not translated in the RSV. It’s associated with reference to the familiar words “the *davar* of the Lord came to me,” the last being in 12.26, and the current one with the phrase “son of man.” The *davar* at hand concerns prophesying (*navy*’, cf. 11.4) against (*’el-*, literally as ‘to’) Israel’s prophets who are in exile in Babylon. Next the English reads “prophesy” whereas the Hebrew has “who prophesy,” this phrase occurring a second time but with the words “out of their minds” where *lev* is used, most commonly as heart (cf. 11.19). In this instance *lev* has a negative sense, that these unnamed prophets (and their number isn’t given) are fabricating their own prophecies to the detriment of their fellow Israelites. One can just imagine them gathered secretly, perhaps at night, figuring out how to deceive their people, oblivious of the harm they’re causing. This makes Ezekiel’s exclamation as to hearing the *davar* of the Lord all the more urgent. It seems that the so-called prophets have blocked their ears to be receptive to this hearing. Given Ezekiel’s experience thus far, it seems highly unlikely they will listen. Still, he remains true to his calling, biting his lips, if you will, as he continues with this *davar*.

Without missing a beat, Ezekiel proceeds in vs. 2 with his *davar* put familiarly as “Thus says (*amar*) the Lord,” this following right on the heels of “Hear the *davar* of the Lord.” The prophets are called out for what they are, speaking from their *lev*, the adjective for foolish or *naval* implying wickedness as well as impiety. “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God’” [Ps 14.1]. Such foolishness results from following their own spirit or *ruach* (cf. 11.24), this being similar but differing from *lev* just mentioned. The former is more dynamic by reason of being associated with the in and out of breathing whereas the latter is located deep within a person and protected by muscle. One could say that *lev* gives birth to *ruach*, that in turn, nourishing its source. In the verse at hand, Ezekiel exclaims that the false prophets have seen nothing, *navy*’, that is to say, the act of prophesying associated with seeing instead of hearing. And it’s this hearing which makes a genuine prophet receptive to hearing the divine *davar*, not spewing forth one’s person visions.

In vs. 4 Ezekiel compares these prophets planning mischief to foxes or *shuhal* which has five other biblical references, one of which is Sg 2.15: “Catch the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vineyards, for your vineyards are in blossom.” Usually such animals are images of deception and stealth. Here they are true to that image by taking refuge among ruins, this word intimating, albeit vaguely, that Jerusalem is destined to fall at some future date even though the prophesy is in Babylon. The false prophesy at such a great distance from Jerusalem gives those uttering their

predictions a certain safety and cushion, if you will. No one can prove or disprove what they are uttering.

So while the inhabitants are being slain and others are being led off into captivity, these foxes will have ensconced themselves safely among the collapsed city walls and come out once the destruction has been wrought. Not only this, but the false prophets failed to repair any breeches or build up the city walls in order to withstand further attacks. Thus in the end they behave in a cowardly fashion. However, their true nature will be revealed “in the day of the Lord” [vs. 6], a day to which they are completely blind.

Vs. 6 speaks of the falsehood and divination consisting of lies which these prophets pass off in imitation, if you will, of Ezekiel when they proclaim “Thus says the Lord,” *na’am* being the verb (cf. 5.28 but not noted there). Almost always *na’am* is used with respect to a divine communication as through a prophet, but in the case at hand, it lacks validity. So while they utter this *na’am*, in truth they have no expectation (*yachal*) of the Lord fulfilling it. For another sense of this verb, cf. Ps 33.22: “Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us even as we hope in you.” That which is the object of this verb is *davar* which applies to the false prophets.

As for the falsehood and divination involved, the first word consists of two in the Hebrew, *chazah* (to see in the sense of behold; cf. 12.27 but not noted there) and *shav’* (wickedness or iniquity, cf. 12.24). As for “divined,” it’s the noun *qesem* with *kazav*, the former found next in vs. 23 and the latter in vs. 7. For a lie to be divined suggests something both fabricated and summoned from the underworld, this hybrid partaking neither of the truth nor fully a lie. In the situation at hand, the false prophets use this to their advantage to deceive a confused and frightened people.

This first part of Chapter Thirteen consisting of “Thus says the Lord” concludes with a rhetorical question in vs. 7 intended as both a warning and confrontation. That is to say, the false prophets have seen a vision which is delusive, *machazeh* and *shav’* (cf. vs. 6). The verb *chazah* as in vs. 6, *machazeh* being derived from it with two other biblical references, Gen 15.1 and Num 24.4, the former being cited here: “After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision.” As expected, this question gets no response nor does the Lord expect one.

Through the mediation of Ezekiel the Lord continues uncovering the deceitfulness of the false prophets in vs. 8 with the second of five “Thus says the Lord” utterances. So if this comes on the heels of a previous one, you know it’s quite important. Perhaps

these people originally were respected among the people but have succumbed to uttering delusions and have seen lies. Their use of *davar* gives their perversity more weight, if you will, in the negative sense. *Shav'* is the noun for “delusions” just mentioned and will make its appearance several more times in the next few verses. As for lies, the noun is *kazav* with the verb *chazah*, both as in vs. 6. So once the Lord brings this to their attention, he uses the exclamation *hineh* (cf. 11.1) or behold coupled with *laken*, therefore...“therefore behold.” Next follows the succinct statement that the Lord is against these false prophets, the preposition ‘*el-*’ being used, literally as “to” which can be indicative of pushing against them.

Vs. 9 forms part of the preceding verse where the Lord brings his hand literally to (‘*el-*’ once again) the prophets with the delusive visions and lying divinations, *machazeh* and *shav'* (cf. vs. 7). The image is one of a huge hand pressing not so much down upon but up against, as to push away. In other words, the Lord is shoving these so-called prophets away from having any council with his people, *sod* fundamentally meaning a couch or cushion and hence a sitting together. “The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him” [Ps 25.14]. Thus *sod* implies a special intimacy and confidentiality among its participants.

The Lord’s hand will push these prophets out from the register of Israel as well as not allow them to return there, the verb *katav* as to write and the noun derived from it, *ketav*. A reference for the latter is 1Chron 28.19: “All this he made clear by the writing from the hand of the Lord concerning it, all the work to be done according to the plan.” Thus not to be registered...written...means to be blotted out of memory and inheritance. Such writing most likely was done on a scroll though it could have been on stone and set up as a kind of memorial to caution future generations. Regardless, to be treated this way was akin to a death sentence. After this thorough condemnation, the combined verses of 8 and 9 end with the familiar “you shall know (*yadah*, cf. 12.20) that I am the Lord God.” If these false prophets chose to know the Lord, what was just recounted never would have happened.

Vs. 10 opens with *yahan hoveyhan* rendered by the **RSV** as “Because, yea” and literally reads “because in because” pretty much for emphasis which applies yet again to a ringing condemnation of the false prophets. Here they’re accused of misleading the people, their very own flesh and blood, *tahah* being the only use of this verb in the Bible which implies being seduced. Such seduction consists of proclaiming *shalom* when it doesn’t exist; most likely the people realize this but in their desperation are willing to be deceived. After all, the false prophets have been active for some time and by now have gathered supporters to their ignoble cause.

A chief way of bringing about this *tahah* is by daubing a newly built wall with whitewash which if applied in a physical sense would mean Jerusalem. This forms the subject of quite a few verses in this chapter, that is, through vs. 16. However, mention of the mere term “whitewash” evokes trying to cover something which eventually will be revealed and broken down. Regardless, Ezekiel is warning Israel not to listen to any proposal by these prophets.

Instead of invaders destroying the wall daubed by the false prophets, the Lord warns those who apply whitewash with its fall by rain, hailstones and a storm. Upon its complete destruction the Lord puts in the mouths of those passing by a question as to where now is the daubing (cf. vs. 12). Although vs. 11 speaks of three natural weather events happening pretty much on their own, vs. 13 attributes them to the Lord in his intent to destroy the wall, *kalah* implying a full end (cf. 11.13).

The Lord continues to address the false prophets, telling them that they will perish, *kalah* again as in the previous verse suggesting that both they and their creation...their daubing...will be wiped out. It seems, however, that the wall built by the people is fine; trouble emerges when the false prophets put their handiwork to it which corrupts everything. However, by now the wall and whitewash are pretty much synonymous as a target of the Lord’s wrath, this being the third mention of *kalah*. In the final analysis such *kalah* of the wall, false prophets and the Lord bring it about combine to effect a truly lethal blow to any self-made plans at restoring Jerusalem, seeing that city far off from Babylon in a false vision of peace or *shalom* mentioned in vs. 16.

The conjunctive beginning vs. 17 indicates a shift of attention from the Lord concerning the false prophets with Ezekiel all the while being privy to this as he had from the beginning. He finds himself at the center of attention which, if asked, he would rather not be. He is to set his face against (*sum* as in 6.1 with the preposition ‘*el-*’), literally as “to the daughters of your people,” this association making it all the more personal and difficult by the permanence intimated by the verb *sum*. As for the daughters engaged in prophesying, they could be their wives, concubines or associates as recounted in vs. 18. And as for the verb *navy*’ (cf. vs. 1), it’s done literally “upon” them, *hal-* which can be seen in conjunction with the ‘*el-*’ or “to” of vs. 18, “against them.”

In vs. 18 the Lord tells Ezekiel after he is to prophesy “to say” (‘*amar*’) or to express his prophesy, ‘*amar*’ taken as a spelling out of what will be the fate of these daughters

as false prophets. These have sewn magic bands upon all wrists, “all” suggesting every Israelite whether complying or not complying. *Taphar* is the verb at hand and has three other biblical references, one of which is Gen 3.7: “And they (the first man and first woman) sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons.” As for the magic bands, *kesatoth* is the noun meaning pillows. It has one other biblical reference in vs. 20, the nature of which is not specified but surely associated with black magic. The daughters also are engaged in fashioning veils to put over the heads of statues, *mispachoth* with one other biblical reference, vs. 1. Such practices have the intent of hunting down souls, *nephesh* found last in 7.19 but not noted there.

The idea laying behind what was just described seems intended to mesmerize unsuspecting victims and seduce them from worship of the Lord. That’s what vs. 19 calls the practice of profanation, *chalal* being the verb (cf. 7.22) which is done for a meager price, that is, barley and bread. And so by their dark arts the daughters put to death those who should remain alive and visa versa by propagating lies or *kazav* (cf. vs. 8). This and the remaining verses of the chapter concerning the daughters is reminiscent of the foolish woman in Proverbs Chapter Nine, the opposite of wisdom.

Despite the deceitful and seductive nature of the daughters just described, from vs. 20 onward we have the Lord stepping in to take matters into his own hands. He begins by tearing off those magic bands of vs. 18 which are associated with hunting souls. These bands might be used as a kind of bait to attract unwitting suspects like birds; the same applies to their veils, the same word in vs. 18 which the women put over the heads of statues. While such practices are abominable and the Lord is quick to take action, nevertheless he shows mercy by the now familiar words “you shall know (*yadah*, cf. vs. 9) that I am the Lord.” This is the fourth and final instance in the current chapter, *yadah* being extended constantly and close to anyone disposed to receive it. The real tragedy consists in this divine closeness not being accepted.

In vs. 22 the Lord says that the daughters of Israel have disheartened the righteous in a false manner, *ka’av* being the verb meaning to have pain or to afflict. “And for the house of Israel there shall be no more a brier to prick or a thorn to hurt them among all their neighbors who have treated them with contempt” [28.24]. This verse forms a single extended sentence where the Lord speaks decisively against these deceitful women. He begins by saying that they have attempted to cause harm to a righteous heart (*lev* and *tsadyq*, cf. vs. 2 and 3.20), that is, by means of lies or *sheqer*. This, of course, contrasts sharply with the Lord saying that he hadn’t acted in such a fashion. “Behold, the wicked man conceives evil and is pregnant with mischief and

brings forth lies” [Ps 7.14].

Vs. 22 continues with the Lord saying that the daughters have encouraged those who are wicked, literally as “strengthened the hands of the wicked,” *chazaq* (cf. 3.14). By doing so, they relinquish the chance for repentance and possibility of saving one’s life which is rendered literally as “not to turn from his evil way to life.” Failure results in the daughters no longer seeing their delusive visions and divinations as noted in vs. 9. Next the Lord says curtly and decisively that he will deliver his people from the daughters...those who belong to Israel but no longer...*natsal* (cf. 7.19) meaning that he will snatch them away from their hands. Yet again he holds out the promise of *yadah* (cf. vs. 21) or knowing him which, given all the wickedness involved, is quite remarkable not only here but elsewhere in the Book of Ezekiel. If it weren’t for such saving words inserted at the right times and places, there would be no hope for Israel nor for anyone else involved.

Son of man: 2

Davar of the Lord: 2

Thus says the Lord: 5

1) navy’, 2) lev, 3) naval, ruach, 4) shuhul, 6) na’am, yachal, chazah, shav’, qesem, kazav, 8) shav’, kazav, chazah, hineh, 9) machazeh, shav’, sod, katav, ketav, yadah, 10) tahah, shalom, 13) kalah, 14) kalah, 15) kalah, 16) shalom, 17) sum, 18) ‘amar, taphar, kesatoh, mispachoth, nephesh, 19) chalal, 21) yadah, 22) ka’av, lev, tsadyq, sheqer, chazaq, 23) natsal, yadah

Chapter Fourteen

1) Then came certain of the elders of Israel to me; and sat before me. 2) And the **word of the Lord** came to me: 3) "**Son of man**, these men have taken their idols into their hearts and set the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces; should I let myself be inquired of at all by them? 4) Therefore speak to them and say to them, **Thus says the Lord God**: Any man of the house of Israel who takes his idols into his heart and sets the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face and yet comes to the prophet, I the Lord will answer him myself because of the multitude of his idols 5) that I may lay hold of the hearts of the house of Israel who are all estranged from me through their idols. 6) "Therefore say to the house of Israel, **Thus says the Lord God**: Repent and turn away from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations. 7) For any one of the house of Israel or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel who separates himself from me, taking his idols into his heart and putting the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face and yet comes to a prophet to inquire for himself of me, I the Lord will answer him myself; 8) and I will set my face against

that man, I will make him a sign and a byword and cut him off from the midst of my people; and you shall know that I am the Lord. 9) And if the prophet be deceived and speak a word, I, the Lord, have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand against him and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel. 10) And they shall bear their punishment—the punishment of the prophet and the punishment of the inquirer shall be alike—11) that the house of Israel may go no more astray from me nor defile themselves any more with all their transgressions, but that they may be my people and I may be their God, says the Lord God." 12) And the **word of the Lord** came to me: 13) "**Son of man**, when a land sins against me by acting faithlessly, and I stretch out my hand against it and break its staff of bread and send famine upon it and cut off from it man and beast, 14) even if these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job, were in it, they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness, says the Lord God. 15) If I cause wild beasts to pass through the land, and they ravage it, and it be made desolate so that no man may pass through because of the beasts; 16) even if these three men were in it, as I live, says the Lord God, they would deliver neither sons nor daughters; they alone would be delivered, but the land would be desolate. 17) Or if I bring a sword upon that land and say, Let a sword go through the land; and I cut off from it man and beast; 18) though these three men were in it, as I live, says the Lord God, they would deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they alone would be delivered. 19) Or if I send a pestilence into that land and pour out my wrath upon it with blood to cut off from it man and beast; 20) even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, says the Lord God, they would deliver neither son nor daughter; they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness. 21) "**For thus says the Lord God:** How much more when I send upon Jerusalem my four sore acts of judgment, sword, famine, evil beasts and pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast! 22) Yet if there should be left in it any survivors to lead out sons and daughters when they come forth to you, and you see their ways and their doings, you will be consoled for the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, for all that I have brought upon it. 23) They will console you when you see their ways and their doings; and you shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, says the Lord God."

The conjunctive *v-* opens this new chapter translated as “then” to show that the elders came to Ezekiel immediately after he had dealt with those who had practiced divinization. To his chagrin, they are no better. By now he must have wondered privately whether any true worshipers of the Lord were left in Babylon. Has each and every Israelite simply transferred their abominations from one place to another? Surely Babylon with its multiplicity of gods was fertile ground to continue their wicked ways. As for the elders or representatives of the Israelites in Babylon, they not only came to him but sat before him, *lephanay*, literally as “to faces of me.” In other words, we have a confrontation for which Ezekiel must steel himself once again. So as soon as these elder took their places, much to Ezekiel’s relief the *davar* of the Lord came to him. The shortness of vs. 2 is deliberate in order to make it clear that despite what amounts to the tediousness of dealing with abominable practices, the

Lord remains in charge.

While Ezekiel knew what was about to happen even before any elder opened his mouth, the divine *davar* came along, inserted itself into his life and informed him that these men have placed their idols within their hearts. Note two uses of “their” with respect to idols and hearts which makes the situation doubly wicked in the Lord’s eyes. A lot is crammed into these words. The verb is *halah* meaning to go up, to ascend followed by the preposition *hal-* or “upon” with respect to *lev* (cf. 13.22) or hearts—“upon their hearts”—a double upon, if you will. As for idols, the noun is *gilulyim* which applies to anything rolled and according to a footnote in the RSV, pertains to dung balls. It’s found thirty-nine times in Ezekiel compared with nine other biblical references according to a note concerning 8.10. And so the prophet is saying that the elders have taken dung balls into...upon...their hearts where they cause a stench for all who come into contact with them.

Furthermore, the elders have set up their iniquity or *havon* (cf. 9.9) as a stumbling block, *mikshul* (cf. 3.20). Not only this, but they have placed it deliberately “opposite their faces” or right smack in front of them, an act of defiance against the Lord. No small wonder that Ezekiel asks the Lord whether they should question him, *darash* being the verb which fundamentally means to dread or to inquire. Just like the verse at hand, 20.1 reads “Certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the Lord and sat before me.”

In vs. 4 (it continues as one extended sentence into vs. 5) the Lord bids Ezekiel first to speak and then say to these elders, that is, *davar* followed by *‘amar*. In other words, he wants to make sure this *davar* sinks into them. Both are followed by a second *‘amar*, “Thus says the Lord.” The object of this address is each and every member of Israel who bears that *gilulyim...idol-as-dung...within his heart* and sets a stumbling block or *mikshul* of iniquity (*havon*) before his face. All three words are noted in vs. 4. The verb *sum* (cf. 13.17) as to set with regard to the stumbling block suggests planning ahead to set it up almost as a monument of shame not just for Ezekiel to behold but for everyone else.

What was just described is done out of deliberate spite, that is, with the intent of going to a prophet. Such a person may be allied with the Lord and affiliated with Ezekiel though “prophet” could be applied loosely to someone faithful to the Lord. Chances are he is in a leadership or counseling role among the Israelites in exile in Babylon, not one of the elders who approached Ezekiel. Much to the surprise of the one with the idol-as-dong and stumbling block set up in his heart, the Lord will step

into the prophet's place and answer him, *hanah* (cf. vs. 7) which has the preposition *l-* or "answer to" him." What rouses the Lord to take such direct action is that the multitude of idols or *gilulym*, given their association with dung (and supposedly that's human), was especially offensive.

Vs. 5 shows the Lord's real intent, that is, to lay hold of the hearts (*lev*, cf. vs. 3) belonging to the house of Israel, house (*bayth*) here as noted in 10.3 implying a domestic element, something homey. The verb *taphas* means not just grasping but taking possession of. "So the sword is given to be polished, that it may be handled" [21.11]. The verse at hand reads literally as "to grasp the house of Israel in their hearts" making the former the direct object of *taphas* with the latter as the real aim. Thus the Lord is taking pains in coming to grips with the nation of Israel in its Babylonian exile because it has become estranged, *nazar* meaning to separate or to abstain. Once again the disgusting smell, if you will, of the idols or *gilulym* is what the Lord wishes to get rid of. "Tell Aaron and his sons to keep away from the holy things of the people of Israel which they dedicate to me so that they may not profane my holy name" [Lev 2.2].

Vs. 6 continues with the Lord speaking through Ezekiel as he has been doing thus far. When the prophet hears the Lord sometimes speaking in an extended fashion, he doesn't memorize these words...these *davar*...because they are inserted within him and have a life of their own. For the premier example of this extended speaking, refer to Moses on Mount Sinai, Chapters Twenty-Five through Thirty-One. So when those hear Ezekiel as in the verse at hand, they receive the extended *davar* in the same fashion as he did, hence the meaning of "Thus says the Lord."

Vs. 6 contains three appeals to the house of Israel: repent, turn away from idols and turn away from abominations where the verb *shuv* is used in each instance. The second has the combined preposition *mehal* or literally "from upon" with respect to *gilulym* and the third concerns *tohevah* (cf. 12.16).

In vs. 7 the Lord addresses two categories of people living together, the house (domicile, if you will) of Israel and strangers sojourning within this house. *Ger* means stranger or foreigner whose verbal root *gur* is used here, both being found in 47.22: "You shall allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the aliens who reside among you." Despite the difference between both groups, they are one in the negative sense of inserting these idols/dung into their hearts and being a stumbling block of iniquity first mentioned in vs. 3. Although both may approach a prophet as noted in vs. 4 with the intent to deceive him and those associated with him, the Lord himself

will answer in his place, something the two hadn't anticipated.

Vs. 8 flows from the previous verse as one sentence, the two being joined by the conjunctive *v-*. It shows the immediate action taken by the Lord where he will set his face against "that man," the phrase referring to the two categories of Israelite and foreigner, they being as one. The text reading bluntly and literally as "I will give my face in (*b-*) that man." Also the Lord will make this man a sign and byword or '*oth* and *mashal* (cf. 4.3 and 12.22 respectively) after which he will cut him off, *karath* being the verb found next in vs. 13. This cutting off gets to the root of the problem, namely, that the man (again, singular) will be removed from the midst (*min* prefaced to *betok*, cf. 12.24) not of the people of Israel but from "my people." Despite this eradication in the literal sense of the word, we have the familiar and comforting refrain that the Lord is doing it so his people may know or *yadah* (cf. 13.23) him.

The conjunctive opening vs. 9 intimates that the Lord is quick to deal with any prophet who had been deceived, *patah* meaning to be open and subject to persuasion. "O Lord, you have deceived me, and I was deceived" [Jer 20.7]. In fact the Lord himself is responsible for this. Part of the reason may be that such a person may have started off with good intentions but later came under the spell of those tied up with idols and have a stumbling block in their hearts. Also he was subject to the numerous exotic deities in Babylon who fostered any abominable practice by the Israelites. Thus the Lord had to put a stop to all this and do so at once. Not only will the Lord destroy him (*shamad* connoting to lay waste), he will do so from the midst of his people, the preposition *min* prefaced to *betok*. In other words, he will suffer the same fate as those described in vs. 8. As for the verb, cf. 25.7: "I will destroy you. Then you will know that I am the Lord." As for the Lord's hand, it's reach extends a long way: from the Lord to *betok* or the midst of the people just mentioned. As for the deception involved, it pertains to the prophet *davar* a *davar*, speaking a word which ultimately turns out to be a lie which is in conformity with those who had influenced him.

Vs. 10 uses the third person plural, "they" referring to both the prophet and the one who has approached him with the intent of deceiving him as well as a larger plot to do the same to Israel in its exile in Babylon. A single punishment or *havon* (cf. vs. 4) is meted out to both, the person influencing the prophet described as an inquirer by the verb *darash* (cf. vs. 3). Vs. 11 continues as an extended sentence, that is, that the house...the domicile...of Israel no longer goes astray from the Lord, *tahah* (cf. 13.10). Similarly, this house no longer can defile itself with their personal transgressions, the verb *tame'* (cf. 9.7) with the noun *pehah*, the latter connoting a falling or breaking

away. “None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him” [18.22]. This is followed by the reassuring words of the Lord who says that he will be their God, the verb *na’am* (cf. 13.6) which can be taken more as an affirmation.

Vs. 12 again has the *davar* of the Lord coming to Ezekiel, the conjunctive *v-* showing the close connection between the last intervention and the current utterance and addressing the prophet as “son of man.” Actually vss. 12-20 center upon three notables from Israel’s history, Noah, Daniel and Job though most likely Job is not a historical character. With regard to Daniel, a footnote in the NIV says, “another Daniel may be referred to.” Regardless, all three are within the context of the question of righteousness or *tsedaqah* (cf. 3.20). As for Noah, he had built the ark and was instrumental in repopulating the earth, human and otherwise, after the great flood. As for Daniel...let’s take the biblical one...he had been taken captive in Babylon and had a whole series of prophetic visions with respect to the end of times. By reason of this, he was particularly dear to the current generation of exiles in Babylon. Finally Job was renowned for patient endurance of calamities. In the end, his fortunes were restored more abundantly than before, this coming after an extended monologue by the Lord as to his sovereignty. That’s something the Israelites could learn from given the almost incessant bombardment by the Lord as to their abominations.

So in light of these three prophetic figures—and surely Ezekiel could identify with each of them in different ways—the following four theoretical settings (theoretical yet with direct practical results) may be taken as follows:

1) Vs. 13 speaks of a land (*‘erets*, cf. 7.2)—not **the** land which implies Israel—but all nations under heaven which recognize the Lord, *‘erets* itself connoting this. Because such a land/people has a certain awareness of divine sovereignty as opposed to a multitude of gods, it knows when its members sin and therefore act faithlessly, the verbs being *chata’* and *mahal*. As for the former, cf. 28.16: “In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned.” As for the latter, it’s used with a noun of the same spelling and reads literally as “to offend offense.” Another reference to the verb is 20.27: “In this again your fathers blasphemed me by dealing treacherously with me.” As for the noun, cf. 15.8: “And I will make the land desolate because they have acted faithlessly, says the Lord.”

Also with respect to this land/people the Lord can cause a famine affecting man and beast.

So as vs. 14 posits, if Noah, Daniel and Job were present in this *‘erets*, *betok*

(cf. vs. 9) or in its midst, they'd be powerless to deliver it and lucky to escape with their own lives, *natsal* (cf. 13.23) being the verb meaning to snatch and used with *nephesh* (cf. 13.18) which often translates as soul. As for these three men, we can substitute or run in parallel with them what they represent, a new creation, prophecy of end times and patience. The righteousness or *tsedaqah* noted a few paragraphs above which belongs to them would be instrumental in this *natsal* or snatching.

2) Vs. 15 mentions wild beasts, *rah* (cf. 11.2) being the adjective which fundamentally means evil yet given the context, isn't far off the mark, these passing through the 'erets and making it desolate or *shakal* or to be bereaved, childless. It's found in 5.17 but not noted there. If Noah, Daniel and Job were in its midst (*betok*, cf. vs. 14), they would be unable to effect a snatching or *natsal* (cf. vs. 14) with respect to sons and daughters. Such beasts, being "evil," would make the land desolate, *shemamah* being a noun (cf. 12.20).

3) In vs. 17 the Lord would bring a sword upon (*hal-*) the land which then would go through it, *b-* or literally "in the land" to cut off (*karath*, cf. vs. 8) from it man and beast. Again, Noah, Daniel and Job wouldn't be able to effect a *natsal* with regard to sons and daughters. Only the three would be delivered, *natsal*.

4) Finally in vs. 19 we have a pestilence or *dever* (cf. 6.11) which is of the same verbal root as *davar*. It's coupled with divine wrath or *chemah* (cf. 9.8) accompanied by blood meaning bloodshed. Noah, Daniel and Job would be helpless to effect *natsal* with regard to son and daughter, being only to *natsal* their own lives (*nephesh*, cf. vs. 14). As for mention of son and daughter, only #1 with respect to vss. 13 and 14 lack their mention.

After using three notables from Israel's history as examples, in vs. 21 the Lord speaks ("Thus says the Lord" occurs last in vs. 6) with a rhetorical question regarding the just detailed four sore acts of judgment, *shephatym* (cf. 5.10) modified by *rah* or evil (cf. vs. 15). This verse is applicable to Jerusalem concerning survivors or *palyt* (cf. 6.9), those who have escaped from the destruction wrought there. Once brought to Babylon and having joined the exiles already there (this implies a twofold destruction of Jerusalem), those already in exile will be consoled for the evil God has brought upon the capitol city. *Nacham* is the verb which, given its alternate meaning of to lament or to groan, is apt in this context. "When Pharaoh sees them, he will comfort himself for all his multitude" [32.31].

The *nacham* given by the Lord to the survivors will be transferred to those in

Babylon once they see their ways and doings (*derek* (cf. 11.21) and *halylah*, the latter suggesting an accomplishment and is found next in 20.43 along with *derek*: “And there you remember your ways and all the doings with which you have polluted yourselves.” And so Chapter Fourteen concludes with the Lord saying that he has brought calamity upon Jerusalem as depicted within the modes of life represented by the three notables of Noah, Daniel and Job, men who were barely able to save themselves compared with that city’s inhabitants.

With regard to the plural “you” in vs. 23, reference is made to those already in exile in Babylon who will be consoled. So when they see the wickedness of those brought to Babylon from Jerusalem, they will know (*yadah*, cf. vs. 8) that the Lord had acted justly and not without cause, *chinam* (cf. 6.10) which also means in vain. As for those already in Babylon, they can’t help but have a certain dread that the multiplicity of gods there will foster their inclinations to abominable practices. Nevertheless, throughout all this both are Israelites and to both is held out the ultimate possibility of knowing...*yadah*...the Lord.

Son of man: 2

Davar of the Lord: 2

Thus says the Lord: 3

3) *halah*, *lev*, *gilulym*, *havon*, *mikshul*, *darash*, 4) ‘*amar*, *ilulym*, *mikshul*, *havon*, *sum*, *hanah*, 5) *lev*, *bayth*, *taphas*, *nazar*, *gilulym*, 6) *shuv*, *gilulym*, *tohevah*, 7) *ger*, *gur*, 8) ‘*oth*, *mashal*, *karath*, *betok*, *yadah*, 9) *patah*, *shamad*, *betok*, 10) *havon*, *darash*, 11) *tahah*, *tame’*, *peshah*, *na’am*, 13) ‘*erets*, *chata’*, *mahal*, 14) *betok*, *natsal*, *nephesh*, *tsedaqah*, 15) *rah*, *shakal*, 16) *betok*, *natsal*, *shemamah*, 17) *karath*, *natsal*, 19) *dever*, *chemah*, 20) *nephesh*, 21) *shephatym*, *rah*, *palyt*, 22) *nacham*, 23) *derek*, *halylah*, *yadah*, *chinam*

Chapter Fifteen

1) And the **word of the Lord** came to me: 2) "**Son of man**, how does the wood of the vine surpass any wood, the vine branch which is among the trees of the forest? 3) Is wood taken from it to make anything? Do men take a peg from it to hang any vessel on? 4) Lo, it is given to the fire for fuel; when the fire has consumed both ends of it, and the middle of it is charred, is it useful for anything? 5) Behold, when it was whole, it was used for nothing; how much less when the fire has consumed it and it is charred, can it ever be used for anything! 6) Therefore **thus says the Lord God**: Like the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give up the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 7) And I will set my face against them; though they escape from the fire, the fire shall yet consume

them; and you will know that I am the Lord, when I set my face against them. 8) And I will make the land desolate because they have acted faithlessly, says the Lord God."

The conjunctive *v-* begins this shortest chapter in the Book of Ezekiel¹, "*davar* of the Lord" having occurred last in 14.12. As in other instances, the verb "came" is lacking; instead the verb "to be" ('was') is preferred. Chapter Fifteen comprises an allegory of a vine or *gephen* which automatically suggests wine and is found next in vs. 6. Actually *gephen* is used with *hets* or wood, and in the first of four rhetorical sentences to Ezekiel it's compared to *hets* of the forest. With regard to this *hets*, the RSV notes that "vines are common figures but the reference to the wood is unique."

Vs. 6 gets to the heart of the matter as introduced by "Thus says (*amar*) the Lord God." While the rhetorical questions are addressed to Ezekiel, the Lord passes him over, if you will, in his eagerness to the heart of the matter. Already he has rummaged through the forest and picked out a particular wood of the vine, an interesting statement because we don't associate vines as growing in such wild places. Instead, they are cultivated with great care, and the vines at hand seem to have grown wild or never had been cultivated. If the latter, that means their wine is bitter, this getting closer to what's bothering the Lord.

As Ezekiel is listening to the Lord expound upon what appears to be an uncultivated vine, right away he intuits where he's going with this. It becomes crystal clear when the Lord says he will give up (*natan*, cf. 7.8) the inhabitants of Jerusalem as fuel for fire or '*aklah* which derives from a verbal root meaning to eat. "You shall be fuel for the fire" [21.32].

And so while Jerusalem is set ablaze, vs. 7 doesn't say outright that the Lord will watch though this implicit. What is said, though, is that he will set his face against them, the verb *natan* (to give) with his face directed literally "in (*b-*) them." Then and only then the second person plural or "you" will know (*yadah*, cf. 14.23) that "I am the Lord." Such knowing is conditioned compared to other examples of knowing, that is, by setting his face (*b-*) in them. The "you" seems to be both the inhabitants of Jerusalem as well as other Israelites. Note that the verb in this second act of setting is *sum* (to set as to place) compared with *natan* (to give) in vs. 7. In other words, it's a more permanent, unchanging type of setting.

¹Compare with the chapter right after it, Chapter Sixteen being the longest in the Book of Ezekiel which is comprised of sixty-three verses. Among those verses the phrase "son of man" occurs only once.

Chapter Fifteen concludes with an extension of the divine devastation wrought against Jerusalem, that is, by making the land (*'erets*, cf. 14.13) desolate, *shemamah* (cf. 14.16) being a noun. Because the Lord is addressing Ezekiel, quickly he realizes that such burning of the capitol and desolation of the land is a result of the Israelites faithlessness. This is expressed literally as "they offend an offense," the verb being *mahal* from which the noun of the same spelling is derived. This is expressed the as in 14.13.

Son of man: 1

"*Davar* of the Lord:" 1

Thus says the Lord: 1

1) *gephen*, *hets*, 6) *natan*, *'aklah*, 7) *natan*, *yadah*, *sum*, 8) *'erets*, *mahal*, *shemamah*

Chapter Sixteen

1) Again the **word of the Lord** came to me: 2) "**Son of man**, make known to Jerusalem her abominations 3) and say, **Thus says the Lord God** to Jerusalem: Your origin and your birth are of the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. 4) And as for your birth, on the day you were born your navel string was not cut, nor were you washed with water to cleanse you nor rubbed with salt nor swathed with bands. 5) No eye pitied you to do any of these things to you out of compassion for you; but you were cast out on the open field, for you were abhorred on the day that you were born. 6) "And when I passed by you and saw you weltering in your blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live, 7) and grow up like a plant of the field.' And you grew up and became tall and arrived at full maidenhood; your breasts were formed, and your hair had grown; yet you were naked and bare. 8) "When I passed by you again and looked upon you, behold, you were at the age for love; and I spread my skirt over you and covered your nakedness: yes, I plighted my troth to you and entered into a covenant with you, says the Lord God, and you became mine. 9) Then I bathed you with water and washed off your blood from you and anointed you with oil. 10) I clothed you also with embroidered cloth and shod you with leather, I swathed you in fine linen and covered you with silk. 11) And I decked you with ornaments and put bracelets on your arms and a chain on your neck. 12) And I put a ring on your nose and earrings in your ears and a beautiful crown upon your head. 13) Thus you were decked with gold and silver; and your raiment was of fine linen and silk and embroidered cloth; you ate fine flour and honey and oil. You grew exceedingly beautiful and came to regal estate. 14) And your renown went forth among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through the splendor which I had bestowed upon you, says the Lord God. 15) "But you trusted in your beauty and played the harlot because of your renown and lavished your harlotries on any passer-by. 16) You took some of your garments and made for yourself gaily decked shrines and on them played the harlot; the like has never been, nor ever shall

be. 17) You also took your fair jewels of my gold and of my silver which I had given you and made for yourself images of men and with them played the harlot; 18) and you took your embroidered garments to cover them and set my oil and my incense before them. 19) Also my bread which I gave you—I fed you with fine flour and oil and honey—you set before them for a pleasing odor, says the Lord God. 20) And you took your sons and your daughters whom you had borne to me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. Were your harlotries so small a matter 21) that you slaughtered my children and delivered them up as an offering by fire to them? 22) And in all your abominations and your harlotries you did not remember the days of your youth when you were naked and bare, weltering in your blood. 23) "And after all your wickedness (woe, woe to you! says the Lord God), 24) you built yourself a vaulted chamber and made yourself a lofty place in every square; 25) at the head of every street you built your lofty place and prostituted your beauty, offering yourself to any passer-by and multiplying your harlotry. 26) You also played the harlot with the Egyptians, your lustful neighbors, multiplying your harlotry to provoke me to anger. 27) Behold, therefore, I stretched out my hand against you and diminished your allotted portion and delivered you to the greed of your enemies, the daughters of the Philistines, who were ashamed of your lewd behavior. 28) You played the harlot also with the Assyrians because you were insatiable; yea, you played the harlot with them, and still you were not satisfied. 29) You multiplied your harlotry also with the trading land of Chaldea; and even with this you were not satisfied. 30) "How lovesick is your heart, says the Lord God, seeing you did all these things, the deeds of a brazen harlot; 31) building your vaulted chamber at the head of every street and making your lofty place in every square. Yet you were not like a harlot because you scorned hire. 32) Adulterous wife, who receives strangers instead of her husband! 33) Men give gifts to all harlots; but you gave your gifts to all your lovers, bribing them to come to you from every side for your harlotries. 34) So you were different from other women in your harlotries: none solicited you to play the harlot; and you gave hire while no hire was given to you; therefore you were different. 35) "Wherefore, O harlot, hear the **word of the Lord**: 36) **Thus says the Lord God**, Because your shame was laid bare and your nakedness uncovered in your harlotries with your lovers, and because of all your idols, and because of the blood of your children that you gave to them, 37) therefore, behold, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, all those you loved and all those you loathed; I will gather them against you from every side and will uncover your nakedness to them that they may see all your nakedness. 38) And I will judge you as women who break wedlock and shed blood are judged and bring upon you the blood of wrath and jealousy. 39) And I will give you into the hand of your lovers, and they shall throw down your vaulted chamber and break down your lofty places; they shall strip you of your clothes and take your fair jewels and leave you naked and bare. 40) They shall bring up a host against you, and they shall stone you and cut you to pieces with their swords. 41) And they shall burn your houses and execute judgments upon you in the sight of many women; I will make you stop playing the harlot, and you shall also give hire no more. 42) So will I satisfy my fury on you, and my jealousy shall depart from you; I will be calm, and will no more be angry. 43) Because you have not remembered the days of your youth but have enraged me with all these things; therefore, behold, I will requite your deeds upon your head, says the Lord

God. "Have you not committed lewdness in addition to all your abominations? 44) Behold, every one who uses proverbs will use this proverb about you, 'Like mother, like daughter.' 45) You are the daughter of your mother who loathed her husband and her children; and you are the sister of your sisters who loathed their husbands and their children. Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite. 46) And your elder sister is Samaria who lived with her daughters to the north of you; and your younger sister who lived to the south of you is Sodom with her daughters. 47) Yet you were not content to walk in their ways, or do according to their abominations; within a very little time you were more corrupt than they in all your ways. 48) As I live, says the Lord God, your sister Sodom and her daughters have not done as you and your daughters have done. 49) Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, surfeit of food and prosperous ease but did not aid the poor and needy. 50) They were haughty and did abominable things before me; therefore I removed them, when I saw it. 51) Samaria has not committed half your sins; you have committed more abominations than they and have made your sisters appear righteous by all the abominations which you have committed. 52) Bear your disgrace, you also, for you have made judgment favorable to your sisters; because of your sins in which you acted more abominably than they, they are more in the right than you. So be ashamed, you also, and bear your disgrace, for you have made your sisters appear righteous. 53) "I will restore their fortunes, both the fortunes of Sodom and her daughters, and the fortunes of Samaria and her daughters, and I will restore your own fortunes in the midst of them, 54) that you may bear your disgrace and be ashamed of all that you have done, becoming a consolation to them. 55) As for your sisters, Sodom and her daughters shall return to their former estate, and Samara and her daughters shall return to their former estate; and you and your daughters shall return to your former estate. 56) Was not your sister Sodom a byword in your mouth in the day of your pride 57) before your wickedness was uncovered? Now you have become like her an object of reproach for the daughters of Edom and all her neighbors and for the daughters of the Philistines, those round about who despise you. 58) You bear the penalty of your lewdness and your abominations, says the Lord. 59) "Yea, **thus says the Lord God:** I will deal with you as you have done, who have despised the oath in breaking the covenant, 60) yet I will remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish with you an everlasting covenant. 61) Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when I take your sisters, both your elder and your younger, and give them to you as daughters, but not on account of the covenant with you. 62) I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the Lord, 63) that you may remember and be confounded and never open your mouth again because of your shame when I forgive you all that you have done, says the Lord God."

The conjunctive *v-* opens this lengthy chapter translated as “again” along with “*davar* of the Lord,” the only other occurrence being in vs. 35. While the previous chapter has the Lord pretty much making a full end of Jerusalem, we see here that Ezekiel is to make known (*yadah*, cf. 15.7) her abominations or *tohevah* (cf. 14.6). Although the Lord spent his wrath against Jerusalem, her abominations remain

which shows the extraordinary endurance of defiance against him. It's almost as though these abominations took on a life of their own after those who gave them birth had perished. Such a perverse inclination shows that not only Jerusalem but the entire nation of Israel's future is dependent upon whether or not her people will do away with such practices. So many times to date we've encountered what seems the end of the line for Israel, but at each time it happens the Lord extends his mercy and we begin again.

Vs. 2 continues as part of the previous verse with "Thus says the Lord God," the direct result of the divine *davar* coming to Ezekiel and giving an account of abominations committed in Jerusalem. It begins with a lengthy description of that city's origins and birth or *mekurah* and *moledeth*. The first literally means a cutting out with two other biblical references, 21.30 and 29.14, the former cited here: "In the place where you were created, in the land of your origin, I will judge you." As for the latter, references are more frequent as in vs. 4 and 23.15, the second cited here: "all of them looking like officers, a picture of Babylonians whose native land was Chaldea."

Next the Lord outlines Jerusalem's lineage and by implication, that of Israel, tracing the nation's roots back to the Canaanites; her father is an Amorite and her mother a Hittite. In sum, the lineage is nothing to be proud of. However, if the people listening to this extended embarrassing account from the Lord can stick with it, they can achieve knowledge of the Lord which is what really counts and sets them apart despite such human origins. An invitation concerning that is found towards the end of this lengthy chapter where we have the familiar "know (*yadah*) the Lord." Ezekiel as mediating these words knew this was the goal but surely must have groaned inwardly as he continues with mediating the Lord's anger toward Jerusalem.

Vs. 4 commences with Israel's birth or *moledeth* (*mekurah* or origin as in vs. 3 isn't mentioned) at which the Lord was present, the unfavorable circumstances being in conformity with her ancestors mentioned in vs. 3. Despite this divine presence, Israel seems to lack any awareness that the Lord was with her as she wallowed in her filth, this being a code word for abominable practices that later would haunt Israel. In vs. 5 apparently Israel had been abandoned without anyone either to have pity upon her or show compassion. The two verbs *chus* and *chamal* are found together in 9.5 and have the preposition *hal-*, that is, pity and compassion upon you.

Such rejection is a result of Israel being abhorred when she had been born, *gahal* connoting loathing as well as being cast out and the only use of this noun in the Bible.

So if the non-Israelites have treated Israel this way, what hope is there? Perhaps Jesus had this story in back of his mind with regard to the parable of the Good Samaritan. Here the tables are turned, the Samaritan being a foreigner who took pity on a Jew in distress (cf. Lk 10.29-37). Like the Samaritan, the Lord is in the act of passing by but stops and sees Israel weltering in her blood, *bus* meaning to tread with the feet making the image all the more pitiable. “When you were naked and bare, weltering in your blood” [vs. 22].

Without coming to Israel’s aide in the physical sense, all the Lord has to do is utter a word in order for her to live (this is at the end of vs. 6) and grow up. According to footnoted in the **RSV**, the Hebrew reads “I have made you a myriad,” the noun being *ravav* (ten thousand) as in Mic 6.7: “Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil?” This *ravav* is born out by Israel having achieved full maidenhood which a footnote of the **RSV** text reads literally as “ornament of ornaments,” the noun being *hady* as in 7.20 but not noted there.

As for growing up, Israel did it on her own unaided either by those who had abandoned her or anyone else who may have passed by with the exception of the Lord. Apparently he stayed in the vicinity watching all those years while Israel came to the throes of adult womanhood. Nevertheless, her plight remained the same which is why the end of vs. 7 says “yet you were naked and bare,” the two similar sounding words being *heyrom* and *harom*. The former implies helplessness while the latter means to be clad poorly. A reference to both is in vs. 22: “You did not remember the days of your youth when you were naked and bare, weltering in your blood.”

Vs. 8 speaks of a later time or when Israel had matured into a woman, not necessarily a full adult, but capable of bearing children which is put as “at the age for love,” *dod* also meaning a friend as well as the brother of a father, this term occurring very frequently in the Song of Songs as “beloved.” “And the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their lust” [23.17]. In the verse at hand, *heth* (cf. 12.27 but not noted there) or time is associated with *dod* which also means opportunity. In order to project Israel—most likely still weltering in her blood—the Lord spread his skirt over her in her nakedness, *kanaph* as in 7.2 also as wing. This image brings to mind the six seraphim in Isaiah’s vision which have wings to cover themselves in the presence of the Lord (cf. Is 6.2). Also this practice is described in Rt 3.9 as entering a marriage relationship which is implied here. Also *kanaph* evokes those wings of the four living creatures in 1.6.

In vs. 8 the **RSV** reads “I plighted my troth to you” which is rendered better in the

NIV as “I entered into a covenant with you,” *beryth* being the noun and first mention of it in this book. “I will deal with you as you have done, who have despised the oath in breaking the covenant” [vs. 59]. *Beryth* is a reminder to Israel of former times, the one with Abraham from which all other flow (cf. Gen 17.2), for it had been smeared and covered by abominable practices. The words “and you became mine” (*ly*) or “to me” reveal the intimacy of this old covenant which the Lord makes new again.

The Lord proceeds to adorn Israel in sixteen different ways which are outlines as follows, that is, through vs. 14:

-Vs. 9: Wash Israel from her blood and accumulated filth. The two verbs associated with this washing are *rachats* and *shataph*, the former pertaining more to the human body and the latter as to inundate or to overwhelm. For the former, cf. vs. 4 but not mentioned there; the same applies to the latter, mentioned in 13.11.

-Anoint with oil or *suk*. “But you shall not anoint yourself with the oil, for your olives shall drop off” [Dt 28.40].

-Vs. 10: Cloth with embroidered cloth or *riqmah* found next in vs. 13. “The princess is decked in her chamber with gold-woven robes; in many-colored robes she is led to the king with her virgin companions, her escort, in her train” [Ps 45.14].

-Shod with leather, *nahal* also as to bolt a door. “A garden encloses is my sister, my spouse” [Sg 4.12].

-Swathed her with fine linen, *chavash* meaning to bind. “I will bind up the crippled” [34.16]. *Shesh* is the material at hand (cf. vs. 13).

-Covered her with silk or *kasah* as in 16.8 but not noted there.

-Vs. 11: Decked with ornaments, *hadah* also in vs. 13 from which ornaments is derived, *hady* (cf. vs. 7).

-Put bracelets on her arms or *tsamyd* as in 23.42: “They put bracelets upon the hands of the women and beautiful crowns upon their heads.”

-Chain on her neck or *ravyd* with one other biblical reference, Gen 41.42: “And (pharaoh) put a gold chain about his (Joseph) neck.”

-Vs. 12: Ring on her nose or *nezem*. “She decked herself with her earrings” [Hos 2.13].

-Beautiful crown upon her head or “crown of beauty” (*tiph'arah*) as in vs. 17.

-Vs. 13: decked with gold and silver, *hadah* as in vs. 11.

-Raiment of fine linen, silk and embroidered cloth or *shesh*, *meshy* and *riqmah*, all as in vs. 10.

-Ate fine flour, honey and oil, the former being *soleth* as in vs. 19.

-Grew exceedingly beautiful (*me'od* used twice for emphasis, cf. 9.9) and came to regal estate. *Tsalach* is a verb meaning to come upon, prosper and found in 15.4

but not noted there.

-Vs. 14: The noun for renown is *shem*, the common word for name which here is associated with Israel's beauty or *yophey* found next in vs. 15, this connoting splendor or brightness. Compare with *tiph'arah* which is more a piece of jewelry as in vs. 12. While Israel may be taking credit for the spread of her fame, she has forgotten that the Lord had given it to her.

While reading the past few verses describing the Lord's treatment of wayward Israel, you could sense the tension building up. Precisely here or in vs. 15 with the conjunctive *v-* translated as "but" we have a series of condemnations by the Lord. But if Israel were to pay close attention, she would bare it willingly because after all, it is the Lord who is speaking. Regardless, we have a long way to go to vs. 62 when we attain that redemptive "*yadah* the Lord." In the meanwhile, Israel must learn to sit tight.

Vs. 15 begins Jerusalem's downward spiral mentioned in vs. 2 and thus by implication, the entire nation of Israel. She trusted in her own beauty or *yophey* (cf. vs. 14) which led to her playing the harlot, *zanah* (cf. 6.9). She used this to pour out her services to everyone who passed by, *shaphak* (cf. 7.8 but not noted there). Such pouring out represents a flagrant in-your-face attitude which the Lord finds impossible to comprehend. In sum, she did this with full knowledge of all that the Lord had done for her as recounted in the sixteen references noted above, instead trusting in her renown or *shem*, name (cf. vs. 14).

Vs. 16 begins a series of four verses with the verb *laqach* (cf. 3.14) or "took" which are outlined as follows:

-Garments to shrines described as being gaily decked, that is, *bamah* (cf. 6.3) or high places. It is with the participle *tala'* fundamentally as spotted where references in Genesis as to be taken in a negative sense, for example, 30.32: "Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep and every black lamb." Upon such high places Jerusalem/Israel plays the harlot.

-Vs. 17: Fair jewels made from God's gold and silver to fashion images of men. Implied is money stolen from Jerusalem's temple to promote abominable practices. Two nouns: *kely* (cf. 9.2) and *tiph'arah* (cf. vs. 12) or "instruments of beauty" from precious metals from the treasury. *Tselem* i(cf. 7.20 but not noted there) is the noun for image which also means a shadow, that insubstantial reality being implied here.

-Vs. 18: Embroidered garments to cover the images of men mentioned in the previous verse (*riqmah*, vs. 13) as well as the Lord's oil and incense used for worship,

again, presumably taken from the Jerusalem temple. Vs. 19 includes bread, fine flour, oil and honey to make a pleasing odor, a *ruach* (cf. 13.3) which is *nychuach* (cf. 13.3 but not noted there), two similar sounding words.

-Vs. 20: Sons and daughter offered as sacrifices and thus devoured; i.e., an instance of cannibalism. This verse contains a rhetorical question spilling into vs. 21 as to the harlotries causing Jerusalem's children to be offered. Then vs. 22 the Lord accuses the city as failing to remember her own youth when she had weltered in her own blood. If she had retained memory of those early years, things would have turned out quite differently.

Vs. 23 continues with the Lord's condemnation of Jerusalem now fully identified as a harlot, this description running through vs.34. He speaks of her wickedness or *rah* (cf. 14.21) after which he interjects a double "woe" or 'oy (cf. 2.10), understandable since he is putting up with all this abuse. Through it all the Lord can see that Jerusalem is blind to her lusts and that curing this blindness automatically would solve the problem at hand. In the meanwhile Ezekiel is the one communicating this to the people which pains him just as much.

Not only did Jerusalem/Israel glory in her harlotries, in vs. 24, she decided to build an elaborate structure in which to carry out her trade. She erected both a vaulted chamber and lofty place (*gav* and *ramah*, cf. 10.12 as 'rims' and vs. 25), presumably the former located in the ladder. Not only that, the verse says that her brothel was smack "in every square" intimating that she had more such places. The same applies in vs. 15 to this *ramah* at the head of every street in which she practiced prostitution, *zannah* (cf. vs. 14). These words intimate that she has taken over the entire city and its inhabitants, transforming Jerusalem into one enormous house of prostitution. Such a description bears close resemblance with the adulterous woman in Proverbs Seven which is countered by wisdom who calls "beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals" [Prov 8.3].

Once so established, Jerusalem/Israel sells herself to four of foreigners:

1) The Egyptians in vs. 26 described as lustful neighbors which reads literally as "being great of flesh." Such greatness, if you will, corresponds to her as multiplying her harlotries or *zannah*, this provoking the Lord to anger, *kahas* also meaning to grieve (cf. 8.17 but not noted there).

2) In vs. 27 the Lord extends his hand against Jerusalem/Israel, literally "on you," and diminished her allotted portion. *Garah* (cf. 5.11) means to scrape off which can be taken as the Lord doing it slowly and deliberately. *Choq* (cf. 11.20) is

the noun for portion, more generally as a decree or ordinance. Once done, the Lord hands her over to the Philistines or those in the more immediate vicinity compared with the Egyptians just mentioned. In other words, she will be squeezed from without and from within. Even these people who had been at enmity with Israel for so long will be ashamed of her lewd behavior, *kalam* found next in vs. 61.

3) In vs. 28 it is the Assyrians to the east with whom Jerusalem/Israel plays the harlot (*zanah*, cf. vs. 26). The Lord speaks of her insatiability or *savah* (with the negative; cf. next verse) with this people which suggests she's getting desperate.

4) Vs. 20 mentions the land of Chaldea described as a land engaged in trading which suggests that Jerusalem/Israel traded in harlotries.

Vs. 30 is approximately midway in this lengthy chapter, so by now Ezekiel must be quite dismayed while communicating the Lord's *davar* and is looking for ways to sustain himself since he knows full well there's plenty more to say. Indeed there is, starting with the Lord who exclaims that the heart (*lev*, cf. 14.5) of Jerusalem/Israel is lovesick, '*amal* meaning to languish or to droop as well as to be sad. "For the fields of Heshbon languish and the vine of Sibmah" [Is 17.8]. These are quite poignant remarks as they take into consideration all that she had done as a brazen harlot, *shalteth* being the only use of this adjective in the Bible.

It seems the Lord has the full attention of Jerusalem/Israel now that she has become lovesick, using the opportunity to remind her of having built places of ill repute to ply her trait. Despite this rather extensive enterprise, in essence she wasn't a harlot...more a john, if you will...because she had not hired herself out. In fact, she scorned it, *qalas* also meaning to mock and has three other biblical references, one being 22.5: "Those who are near and those who are far from you will mock you, you infamous one, full of tumult."

In vs. 32 she is called a wife who behaves adulterously, *na'aph* connoting rebellion, preferring it over her own husband, this inferring the Lord. "And I will judge you as women who break wedlock and shed blood are judged" [vs. 38]. Instead of men giving gifts to her as a harlot, she gives them to her lovers in order to bribe them. *Nedeh* is the noun for gifts, the only use of this word in the Bible. They resemble bribes, the verb being *shachad* which had one other biblical reference: "From your wealth offer a bride for me" [Job 6.22]. Jerusalem/Israel is different from other harlots because she is unsolicited. She had to go off on her own which set her apart, *hephek* in vs. 34 (only use of this term in the Bible) implying perversity or what is contrary to normal behavior.

In vs. 35 the Lord continues his invective through the mouth of Ezekiel who, as noted earlier, doesn't enjoy this a bit. Outrightly he calls her a harlot or *zanah* (cf. vs. 28) who now must hear the *davar* of the Lord. Even though what follows for the bulk of the chapter is painful, chances are that Jerusalem/Israel is relieved at being discovered for what she has become. She knows inwardly that her current demeanor doesn't reflect her divine election. Surely she must be thinking to herself that her inmost desire is in sharp conflict with her external behavior, and she can't see to reconcile the two.

Vs. 36 contains three instances of "because," that is, relative to instances of disgraceful behavior:

1) Shame and nakedness or *nechosheth* and *hervah*. The former fundamentally means brass and is found last in 9.2 but not noted there. The same applies to the latter, cf. vs. 8. Note the two verbs pertaining to involuntary manifestation, *shaphak* and *galah*. The former means to pour out (cf. vs. 15) and the latter, to uncover or lay bare (cf. vss. 15 and 12.4 respectively).

2) Idols or *gilulym* (cf. 14.6).

3) Blood of your children offered to the just mentioned idols.

As a result of this, in vs. 37 the Lord resolves to gather or *qavats* (cf. 11.17) each and every lover of Jerusalem/Israel which consists of four types:

1) Lovers.

2) Those with whom she had taken pleasure, *harav* meaning to make a pledge or surety and thus has a transactional sense about it. "Your dealers in merchandise" [27.27].

3) Those whom she had loved ('*ahav*).

4) Those whom she loathed, *sane'* meaning to hate. "Behold, I will deliver you into the hands of those whom you hate" [23.28]. Once assembled, the Lord will present her to all four and uncover her nakedness that they may behold her in this condition which not just resembles the state from which she had started out when the Lord found her but is even worse.

From here (vs. 38) it gets pretty nasty for Jerusalem/Israel, still a long way off until vs. 62 to hear "*yadah* or to know the Lord." Now the Lord is going to pass judgment or *shaphat* (cf. 11.10) as a disloyal wife as well as bringing upon her not just wrath and jealousy (*chemah* and *qin'ah*, 14.18 and 8.3 respectively) but blood associated it which implies murder. Following this the Lord will have her former lovers do the

reverse of what he had done for her, that is to say, tear down her chamber and lofty places, strip her and leave her exposed for all to gawk at. Next she will be stoned, cut to pieces, all in the sight of women which makes her plight all the more humiliating.

Vs. 42 provides some relief from this all-out assault, if you will. The Lord says that he will satisfy his fury, *nuach* and *chemah*, 5.13 and vs. 38 respectively, the verb meaning that such anger will come to a rest. The same applies to his jealousy or *qin'ah* (cf. vs. 38) followed by being calm and having no anger. The two verbs are *shaqat* and *kahas* (cf. vs. 26), the former also meaning to lie down. The former occurs next in vs. 49 as “prosperous ease.”

Vs. 43 gets to the root of this extended tragedy, namely, that Jerusalem/Israel hasn't remembered the days of our youth when the Lord found her and cared for her. Early on her own beauty got in the way which led down this path to disaster causing the Lord to be enraged, *ragaz* also meaning to tremble as in Ps 18.7: “Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked because he was angry.” Such anger will result in requiting her deeds which reads literally as “I will give your way in your head” or slam her where she's most vulnerable. Vs. 43 continues with a second sentence rhetorical in tone, telling her that she has committed lewdness along with her abominations, *zimah* and *tohevah* (cf. vss. 43 and 1 respectively).

Vs. 44 shifts to a different level, that is, the Lord (again, keeping in mind the mediation of Ezekiel) recounting the ignominious past of Jerusalem/Israel in terms of a proverb or *mashal* (cf. 14.8) with *hineh* (cf. 13.8) or “behold” with the intent not just of grabbing attention but to have this past remembered. It runs “Like mother, like daughter.” We can see the roots of this proverb back in vs. 3, “and your mother a Hittite.” Vs. 45 takes up the same theme and adds the father, an Amorite, also hearkening back to vs. 3.

In vs. 46 the Lord throws in Samaria as elder sister and younger sister as Sodom. It seems that the former is singled out by reason of her attachment to idols as in Is 10.11: “Shall I not do to Jerusalem and her idols as I have done to Samaria and her images?” Just the mere mention of these two places, especially the latter, is embarrassing in the extreme. As this chapter has shown, the Lord certainly knows how to deal out humiliations which, after all, are well deserved.

Vs. 47 hits pretty hard by saying that Jerusalem/Israel wanted more than the abominations of both Samaria and Sodom; in fact she was more corrupt, *shachath*

(cf. 9.8). This is put in two ways, *derek*: those of the two just mentioned and her own. As for Sodom, the Lord singles out this city as being a sister who was well off yet failed to use its wealth to assist the poor and needy, *hany*’ and *‘evyon* both found together in 18.12: “oppresses the poor and needy.” The verb here is *chazaq* (cf. 13.32) meaning to hold firm or fast. Note that the text puts all three—Jerusalem/Israel, Samaria and Sodom—as sisters meaning that they are related closely in their abominable practices. However, as vs. 51 says, Samaria hadn’t committed half her sins, making her appear righteous, the verb being *tsadaq*. This, of course, compelled the Lord remove them, *sur* (cf. 6.9) also as to withdraw. “He was angry at Job because he justified himself rather than God” [25.1].

In light of this unfavorable comparison, in vs. 52 the Lord commands Jerusalem/Israel to bear her disgrace, *kelimah* also as shame (cf. vs. 54). Here the verb *tsadaq* occurs twice and used with respect to a comparison with her sisters.

In vs. 53 the Lord says that he will restore (*shuv*, cf. 14.6) the fortunes of Sodom, Samaria and finally, that of Jerusalem/Israel, the noun being *shevyth* which literally means captivity, *shuv* and *shevyth* sounding similar. “Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel” [39.25]. In other words, the captivity in which all three found themselves due to their own devices will be resolved. Note that the daughters of each are mentioned (not sons) which can intimate the potential for an eventual espousal relationship with the Lord. As for Jerusalem/Israel, her restoration will be in the midst (*betok*, cf. 14.16) of the other two, in their very center.

Vs. 54 is a sentence continued joined with the previous verse and presents a condition introduced by the important phrase “so that.” That is to say, Israel/Jerusalem is to first bear her disgrace and be ashamed what she had done, *kalam* being translated as both (cf. vs. 27). “So that” doesn’t stop there but continues into her becoming a consolation for Sodom and Samaria, *nacham* (cf. 14.22).

Shuv or return is found next in vs. 55 (again, mention of daughters relative to Sodom and Samaria) with respect to their original state or *qadmah*. “And I will cause you to be inhabited as in your former times” [36.11].

Vs. 56 is a rhetorical question by the Lord to Jerusalem/Israel, expecting no answer of course, but meant to put her on the spot. He calls her sister Sodom a byword, *shemuhah* also as report, this being derived from the common verb to hear and found last in 7.26 but not noted there. It’s associated not just with pride or *ga’on* (cf.

7.20) but a day of pride, day in the extended sense of encompassing the time since the Lord had come to her rescue as described earlier in this chapter. However, she had her notoriety until the Lord uncovered her wickedness (*rah*, cf. vs. 23) for all to behold.

Vs. 57 mentions two other daughters, if you will, those of Edom (the Hebrew has Aram) and those of the Philistines. To them Jerusalem/Israel is an object of reproach with the **RSV** denoting “uncertain” and can be rendered literally as “time of reproach” or *cherpah* (cf. 5.15 but not noted there). This is applicable to the former whereas to the latter she is despised, *shut*, having two other biblical references, 28.24 and 28.26, the former running as follows: “And for the house of Israel there shall be no more a brier to prick or a thorn to hurt them among all their neighbors who have treated them with contempt.”

This extended tirade against Jerusalem/Israel concludes in vs. 58 with the Lord telling her that she is responsible for her lewdness and abominations, *zimah* and *tohevah*, both found in vs. 43.

At last or at the end of a very difficult experience for Jerusalem/Israel to bear the Lord shifts gears, if you will, to a desire to console her. Although he will deal with her as those who have despised their oath and broke the covenant, *alah* and *beryth*, he will relent. The first also can mean a curse and applies to a covenant confirmed by an oath such as *beryth*, that being noted last in vs. 8. As for the covenant, the Lord will remember (*zakar*, cf. 6.9) it, that is, the one going back to the days of her youth, and make a lasting one. This refers to vs. 43 when Jerusalem/Israel failed to remember the days of her youth.

In vs. 60 the Lord will remember this covenant whereas in vs. 61 he says that she will remember her ways. Thus we have two forms of remembering or *zakar*, divine and human. The latter causes shame or *kalam* (cf. vs. 27) when the Lord takes both the elder and younger sister of Jerusalem/Israel and gives them as her daughters. However, this will not take into account the covenant noted above. Note that vs. 61 of the **RSV** has “I” in reference to the Lord whereas the Hebrew has “you.” The meaning of this transference, of two sisters to becoming daughters isn’t spelled out. However, what’s important is the Lord making a covenant with the intent of knowing (*yadah*) that in the end he is in charge of the matter at hand.

Vs. 63 brings to conclusion this longest chapter in the Book of Ezekiel with the consequence of knowing...*yadah*...the Lord as being sovereign, that is to say,

Jerusalem/Israel will remember and be confounded, *bosh* (cf. vs. 53 but not noted there). This instance of remembering or *zakar* flows from the one of vs. 61 with respect to her ways (*derek*, cf. vs. 47), and she will be silenced because of her shame, *kelimah* (cf. vs. 52). Such silence is more negative whereas the positive type comes about when the Lord forgives what she had done, the verb being *kaphar* meaning to cover or to conceal. “This is the offering for cereal offerings...to make atonement for them” [45.15]. Despite this concealment, Jerusalem/Israel will know about it and hopefully keep it in mind so as not to fall into further abominations, etc.

Son of man: 1

Davar of the Lord: 2

Thus says the Lord: 3

1) yadah, tohevah, 3) mekurah, moledeth, 4) moledth, chus, chamal, gahal, 6) bus, 7) hady, heyrom, harom, 8) dod, heth, kanaph, beryth, 9) rachats, shataph, suk, 10) riqmah, nahal, chavash, shesh, kasah, 11) hadah, tsamyd, ravyd, 12) nezem, tiph'arah, 13) hadah, shesh, meshy, riqmah, soleth, me'od, tsaleach, 14) yophey, zarah, shem, 15) shaphak, 16) laqach, bamah, tala', 17) kely, tiph'arah, tselem, 18) riqmah, 19) ruach, nychuach, 23) rah, 'oy, 24) gav, ramah, 25) ramah, zarah, 26) kahash, zarah, 27) garah, choq, kalam, 28) zarah, savah, 30) lev, shalteth, 31) qalas, 32) na'aph, nedeh, 33) shachad, 34) hephek, 35) zarah, 36) nechosheth, hervah, shaphak, galah, gilulyim, 37) qavats, harav, 'ahav, sane', 38) shaphat, chemah, qin'ah, 42) nuach, chemah, qin'ah, shaqat, kahash, 43) ragaz, zimah, tohevah, 44) mashal, hineh, 47) shachath, hany', 'evyon, chazaq, 50) sur, 51) tsadaq, 52) tsadaq, kelimah, 53) shuv, shevyth, betok, 54) kalam, nacham, 55) shuv, qadmah, 56) shemuhah, ga'on, 57) rah, cherpah, shut, 58) zimah, tohevah, 59) 'alah, beryth, 60) zakar, 61) kalam, 62) yadah, 63) bosh, derek, kelimah, kaphar

Chapter Seventeen

1) The **word of the Lord** came to me: 2) "**Son of man**, propound a riddle and speak an allegory to the house of Israel; 3) say, **Thus says the Lord God**: A great eagle with great wings and long pinions, rich in plumage of many colors, came to Lebanon and took the top of the cedar; 4) he broke off the topmost of its young twigs and carried it to a land of trade and set it in a city of merchants. 5) Then he took of the seed of the land and planted it in fertile soil; he placed it beside abundant waters. He set it like a willow twig, 6) and it sprouted and became a low spreading vine, and its branches turned toward him, and its roots remained where it stood. So it became a vine and brought forth branches and put forth foliage. 7) "But there was another great eagle with great wings and much plumage; and behold, this vine bent its roots toward him and shot forth its branches toward him that he

might water it. From the bed where it was planted 8) he transplanted it to good soil by abundant waters that it might bring forth branches and bear fruit and become a noble vine. 9) Say, **Thus says the Lord God:** Will it thrive? Will he not pull up its roots and cut off its branches so that all its fresh sprouting leaves wither? It will not take a strong arm or many people to pull it from its roots. 10) Behold, when it is transplanted, will it thrive? Will it not utterly wither when the east wind strikes it—wither away on the bed where it grew?" 11) Then the **word of the Lord** came to me: 12) "Say now to the rebellious house, Do you not know what these things mean? Tell them, Behold, the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and took her king and her princes and brought them to him to Babylon. 13) And he took one of the seed royal and made a covenant with him, putting him under oath. (The chief men of the land he had taken away 14) that the kingdom might be humble and not lift itself up, and that by keeping his covenant it might stand.) 15) But he rebelled against him by sending ambassadors to Egypt that they might give him horses and a large army. Will he succeed? Can a man escape who does such things? Can he break the covenant and yet escape? 16) As I live, says the Lord God, surely in the place where the king dwells who made him king, whose oath he despised, and whose covenant with him he broke, in Babylon he shall die. 17) Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company will not help him in war when mounds are cast up and siege walls built to cut off many lives. 18) Because he despised the oath and broke the covenant, because he gave his hand and yet did all these things, he shall not escape. 19) Therefore **thus says the Lord God:** As I live, surely my oath which he despised, and my covenant which he broke, I will requite upon his head. 20) I will spread my net over him, and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to Babylon and enter into judgment with him there for the treason he has committed against me. 21) And all the pick of his troops shall fall by the sword, and the survivors shall be scattered to every wind; and you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken." 22) **Thus says the Lord God:** "I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar and will set it out; I will break off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and I myself will plant it upon a high and lofty mountain; 23) on the mountain height of Israel will I plant it, that it may bring forth boughs and bear fruit and become a noble cedar; and under it will dwell all kinds of beasts; in the shade of its branches birds of every sort will nest. 24) And all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord bring low the high tree and make high the low tree, dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish. I the Lord have spoken, and I will do it."

As with the last chapter this new one begins with the familiar conjunctive *v-* translated as “and” but not in the **RSV** translation and shows the close connection between what had just transpired and what is to follow. In actuality there is no gap between the two instances of *davar* coming (the verb ‘to be’ is used, not coming) to Ezekiel. This implies that for him there is no temporal gap between the two sets of events.

Now the divine *davar* addresses Ezekiel as “son of man, the only occurrence of this phrase in Chapter Seventeen. He is to speak to the house of Israel both a riddle and

allegory or *chydah* and *mashal* (cf. 16.44), the former a kind of enigma and the latter a saying. As for *chydah* as well as *mashal*, cf. Prov 1.6: “To understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise and their riddles.” The verbs involved are the roots for each noun, *chud* and *mashal* (cf. 12.23), the former has three other references, all from Judges, one being 14.13: “Put your riddle that we may hear it.” As for what’s involved, it pertains to two eagles. The first eagle (both it and the second of vs. 7 are ‘great’) or *nesher* (cf. 10.14 but not noted there) is characterized by large wings, long pinions and rich plumage, the last consisting of many colors or the noun *riqmah* which means something embroidered and found last in 16.18. What this eagle does may be outlined briefly as follows, that is, through vs 6, the cast of characters being (see a footnote in the **RSV** for further information) Nebuchdrezzar, house of David, Jehoiachin, Babylonia, Babylon and Zedekiah. Note that twig starts out as a cedar and becomes a vine, the latter associated with producing wine:

- Having flown to Lebanon, it took the top of a cedar, that land being famous for such trees as used in Solomon’s temple.
- Young twigs from the topmost of the cedar are brought to a land of trade.
- Planted the seed of the land in fertile soil.
- Set this seed as a willow twig which sprouted as a vine and brought forth foliage.

In vs. 7 the *davar* of the Lord speaks again by way of riddle and allegory of a second great eagle which the **RSV** identifies as Psammetichus II of Egypt described as follows:

- Similar to the first great eagle with great wing and much plumage but lacking *riqmah* or being embroidered (many colors).
- Mention of a vine, the source not being given whose roots and branches inclined to the eagle so that he might water it.
- Transplanted or *shatal* (the Hebrew is passive, ‘was transplanted’) to good soil by abundant waters to bear fruit and become a noble vine.

Between vss. 9 and 10 we have five rhetorical questions put forth by the Lord prefaced with Thus says the Lord:

- Will it (the vine) thrive? *Tsalach* is the verb also meaning to prosper as in 16.13.
- Will not the Lord uproot it?
- Will it thrive once transplanted, *shatal* (cf. vs. 8)?

-Will it not utterly wither, *yavesh* also as to dry up? “The east wind dried it up; its fruit was stripped off” [19.12].

-Will it not utterly wither, this time when the east wind strikes it?

After having spoken of these two eagles in terms of a riddle and enigma, in vs. 11 the *davar* of the Lord comes or literally “is to me” or Ezekiel as in vs. 1. Such a statement acts as a kind of introduction to something new or related to what had just been uttered. Of course Ezekiel was aware when this *davar* was not present within him and most likely was glad when it was so because of the dire messages he has been communicating. However, he knew the Lord was not finished with him yet.

And so the divine *davar* in vs. 12 predictably yet inauspiciously is addressed to the rebellious (*mery*, cf. 12.2) house, the proper name “Israel” being omitted pretty much out of disgust. It presumes that Ezekiel’s listeners have been paying attention to the words of Chapter Seventeen, the reason for the rhetorical question as to them knowing (*yadah*, cf. 16.62) what they mean. Without waiting for a response, the Lord jumps the gun on them with word about the king (ie., Nebuchadrezzar) of Babylon’s invasion of Jerusalem and exile of her princes. That seems to be the first great eagle with the second one being Psammetichus II of Egypt.

Much of what follows between vss. 13 and 21 deals with king Zedekiah’s relationship with the two kings just mentioned. Although details here are omitted, what counts is that these verses are being spoken by the Lord. They form that *davar* begun a second time in vs. 11 enabling the people of Israel to sustain themselves through the current tribulations. The trick, if you will, for them to come through all this is to continue listening to this *davar* and not turn away. One of the key words of this section is in vs. 20, *mahal* (cf. 15.8) which means to commit treason, this in reference to king Zedekiah. It follows in vs. 21 predicably and with tremendous relief, “you shall know (*yadah*, cf. vs. 12) that I, the Lord, have spoken.” Such is one overall pattern of the Book of Ezekiel that has become familiar and is bound to repeat itself, simultaneously distressing and comforting.

Vs. 22 through 24 or to the conclusion of this chapter has the Lord speaking of the cedar, mostly likely hearkening back to the one from Lebanon in vs. 3. In other words, the previous imagery is used in a totally new and unexpected way. For Israel to properly comprehend it, they need to *yadah* the Lord as noted in vs. 21, for it seems that whenever this invitation is extended, nothing is said of Israel accepting it.

From vs. 22 to the conclusion of this chapter the Lord adopts a positive stance

starting out by taking a sprig from the cedar's top, *tsamereth* having four other biblical references, all in Ezekiel. *Tsamereth* occurs last in vs. 3 but isn't noted there. Note that it's the Lord who is doing this, not the eagle as in vs. 3, and he transfers it to a mountain which is both lofty and high, *gavah* (cf. vs. 24 but not noted there) and *talal* (only use of this word in the Bible). In other words, the height of the cedar will be transformed into the height of the mountain which can be taken as Mount Zion. And as remarked earlier, Solomon used cedars for construction of the temple in Jerusalem. In fact, the next verse speaks of the "mountain of Israel" which can represent both the nation or Zion; regardless, the two are pretty much synonymous.

Once this sprig has been brought over to the mountain height of Israel its bough will bear fruit and become a cedar which it had been originally. In its shade or in its temple built of cedar will dwell various types of beasts, this image being reminiscent of the parable of the mustard seed. Despite being the smallest of seeds, it becomes the greatest of shrubs for birds to make their nests (cf. Mt 13.31-32).

Chapter Seventeen concludes with all the trees of the field knowing (*yadah*, cf. vs. 21) that the Lord exalts the lowly tree and brings low the high tree. The Lord is explicit here, that is, he has spoken (*davar*) and will do it, saying and doing being one and the same. As for this exalting and bringing low, those listening to Ezekiel can't but recall the story of Jerusalem/Israel starting out as having been abandoned but raised by the Lord after which she debased herself. The same can happen again and most likely it will, both the Lord and Israel knowing it. That's the remarkable thing about all these events. Despite the people's abominations and disloyalty, the Lord steps and redeems them over and over.

Son of man: 1

Davar of the Lord: 2

Thus says the Lord: 4

2) chydah, mashal, 3) nesher, riqmah, 8) shatal, 9) tsalach, shatal, yavesh, 12) mery, yadah, 20) mahal, 21) yadah, 22) tsamereth, gavah, talal, 24) yadah