

Chapter Twenty

1) In the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the Lord and sat before me. 2) And **the word of the Lord** came to me: 3) "**Son of man**, speak to the elders of Israel and say to them, **Thus says the Lord God**, Is it to inquire of me that you come? As I live, says the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you. 4) Will you judge them, **son of man**, will you judge them? Then let them know the abominations of their fathers 5) and say to them, **Thus says the Lord God**: On the day when I chose Israel, I swore to the seed of the house of Jacob, making myself known to them in the land of Egypt, I swore to them, saying, I am the Lord your God. 6) On that day I swore to them that I would bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most glorious of all lands. 7) And I said to them, Cast away the detestable things your eyes feast on, every one of you and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am the Lord your God. 8) But they rebelled against me and would not listen to me; they did not every man cast away the detestable things their eyes feasted on, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. "Then I thought I would pour out my wrath upon them and spend my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. 9) But I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they dwelt, in whose sight I made myself known to them in bringing them out of the land of Egypt. 10) So I led them out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. 11) I gave them my statutes and showed them my ordinances by whose observance man shall live. 12) Moreover I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between me and them that they might know that I the Lord sanctify them. 13) But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness; they did not walk in my statutes but rejected my ordinances by whose observance man shall live; and my Sabbaths they greatly profaned. "Then I thought I would pour out my wrath upon them in the wilderness to make a full end of them. 14) But I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations in whose sight I had brought them out. 15) Moreover I swore to them in the wilderness that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most glorious of all lands, 16) because they rejected my ordinances and did not walk in my statutes and profaned my Sabbaths; for their heart went after their idols. 17) Nevertheless my eye spared them, and I did not destroy them or make a full end of them in the wilderness. 18) "And I said to their children in the wilderness, Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers nor observe their ordinances nor defile yourselves with their idols. 19) I the Lord am your God; walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances 20) and hallow my Sabbaths that they may be a sign between me and you, that you may **know that I the Lord am your God**. 21) But the children rebelled against me; they did not walk in my statutes and were not careful to observe my ordinances by whose observance man shall live; they profaned my Sabbaths. "Then I thought I would pour out my wrath upon them and spend my anger against them in the wilderness. 22) But I withheld my hand and acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations in whose sight I had brought them out. 23) Moreover I swore to them in the wilderness that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them through the countries 24) because they had not executed my ordinances but had rejected my statutes and profaned my Sabbaths, and their eyes were set on their fathers' idols. 25) Moreover I gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances by which they could not have life; 26) and I defiled them through their very gifts in making them offer by fire all their first-born that I might horrify them; I did it that they might **know that I am the Lord**. 27) "Therefore, **son of man**, speak to the house of Israel and say to them, **Thus says the Lord God**: In this again your fathers blasphemed me by dealing treacherously with me. 28) For when I had brought them into the land which I swore to give

them, then wherever they saw any high hill or any leafy tree, there they offered their sacrifices and presented the provocation of their offering; there they sent up their soothing odors, and there they poured out their drink offerings. 29) (I said to them, What is the high place to which you go? So its name is called Bamah to this day.) 30) Wherefore say to the house of Israel, **Thus says the Lord God:** Will you defile yourselves after the manner of your fathers and go astray after their detestable things? 31) When you offer your gifts and sacrifice your sons by fire, you defile yourselves with all your idols to this day. And shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, says the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you. 32) "What is in your mind shall never happen—the thought, 'Let us be like the nations, like the tribes of the countries and worship wood and stone.' 33) "As I live, says the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I will be king over you. 34) I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out; 35) and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face. 36) As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you, says the Lord God. 37) I will make you pass under the rod, and I will let you go in by number. 38) I will purge out the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against me; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will **know that I am the Lord.** 39) "As for you, O house of Israel, **thus says the Lord God:** Go serve every one of you his idols, now and hereafter, if you will not listen to me; but my holy name you shall no more profane with your gifts and your idols. 40) "For on my holy mountain, the mountain height of Israel, says the Lord God, there all the house of Israel, all of them, shall serve me in the land; there I will accept them, and there I will require your contributions and the choicest of your gifts with all your sacred offerings. 41) As a pleasing odor I will accept you, when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will manifest my holiness among you in the sight of the nations. 42) And you shall **know that I am the Lord,** when I bring you into the land of Israel, the country which I swore to give to your fathers. 43) And there you shall remember your ways and all the doings with which you have polluted yourselves; and you shall loathe yourselves for all the evils that you have committed. 44) And you shall **know that I am the Lord** when I deal with you for my name's sake, not according to your evil ways nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel, says the Lord God." 45) And **the word of the Lord** came to me: 46) "**Son of man,** set your face toward the south, preach against the south and prophesy against the forest land in the Negeb; 47) say to the forest of the Negeb, Hear **the word of the Lord: Thus says the Lord God,** Behold, I will kindle a fire in you, and it shall devour every green tree in you and every dry tree; the blazing flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from south to north shall be scorched by it. 48) All flesh shall see that I the Lord have kindled it; it shall not be quenched." 49) Then I said, "Ah Lord God! they are saying of me, 'Is he not a maker of allegories?'"

This verse opens with a specific time and date as is the case with the first verse of this book as well as 8.1 and 14.1. It has the conjunctive *v-* which goes untranslated in the RSV meaning that the meeting at hand takes place right on the heels of the Lord judging Israel as in the verse of the last chapter. Apart from the context at hand, the power, if you will, of such a small word as this conjunctive at the beginning of a chapter along with a particular frame of time lends a definite expectation and anticipation as to what will follow despite our not knowing about it.

In the last meeting (cf. 8.1+) the Lord's hand fell upon Ezekiel whereas here certain elders of Israel inquired of the Lord, *darash* being used as in 14.3 or when the prophet asks the Lord whether he should be *darash* by this delegation. By now Ezekiel had gained a reputation among the people, the reason why these elders trusted him to do the *darash*, the reason why they "sat before me," directly opposite or face-to-face. In the face of a looming crisis the elders wish to get right down to business, dispensing with any pleasantries. One can't but help wonder about the mental state of these representatives, of what they discussed before meeting the prophet. They must have held numerous other meetings and came to the present one with a sense of foreboding, knowing in advance what they will hear.

Without missing a beat as indicated by the conjunctive *v-* as "and," the *davar* of the Lord came to Ezekiel and speaks with him through vs. 45 after which comes another mention of this phrase, a second *davar*, if you will, continuing to the end of the chapter. It resumes beginning with Chapter Twenty-One in what appears to be another context. As for the elders, nothing is said about their response, that being left to the reader's imagination. Given the rather dire nature of what the divine *davar* had communicated thus far, it's not off the mark to expect more of the same.

Ezekiel is to *davar* the divine *davar* to the elders smack in front of him, and despite its length (through this entire chapter), it's transmitted instantaneously, the verses at hand simply being an unpacking in space and time of that *davar*. The Lord begins with a question which has the ominous tone of a rebuke, that is, why these representatives had approached Ezekiel. He says outrightly that he won't subject himself to their *darash* which is what Ezekiel expected. Even the elders could see that by the expression on his face though he hadn't yet communicated the Lord's *davar* to them. Then in the same breath (vs. 4) the Lord speaks to the prophet about judging these elders and through them, Israel, the verb being *shaphat* (cf. 18.30). He mentions *shaphat* not just once but twice for emphasis.

In vs. 4 Ezekiel...predictably...is to inform the elders not just of their abominations but those of their fathers, *tohevah* (cf. 18.13) with the verb *yadah* (cf. 17.24), to know them in a very intimate fashion. "Fathers" means that these abominations had been practiced long before they came on the scene and are the current bearers of such practices. The question, then, is will they be able to bring a stop to this transmission of evil. Vs. 5 continues as one sentence with a further "Thus says the Lord God," indicative of the seriousness at hand.

In vs. 5 the Lord hearkens back to the day which may be called a *kairos* event when he had chosen Israel, for example, Dt 7.6: "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession (etc.)." Note the use here as well as in vs. 5 not just of the "Lord" but of the "Lord your God," a way to bring home the fact of who is in charge. Then he adds not just the house of Jacob but its seeds, meaning the past is brought into the present. More specifically that past is when the Lord made himself known (*yadah*, cf. vs. 4) in Egypt which seems to imply not

his revelation to Moses in the Sinai desert but the miracles, plagues and crossing of the Red Sea.

Vss. 5-26 is a recap of the Lord's deliverance of Israel from Egypt, this theme found frequently throughout the Bible and repeated by reason of its importance. Behind it are the four hundred years of prosperity in that land and before that, Israel having been in Canaan since Abraham's time. In fact, we know nothing of this extended period of time in Egypt. If it were filled with trials and persecutions, surely we'd know about them. After Egypt comes forty years in Sinai as a preparation of re-entering Canaan and taking possession of it. Despite this being repeated endlessly, Israel forgets almost at once, indicative of the weakness of human memory both individually and collectively. The repetitive nature of vss. 5-26 is outlined as follows. The conjunctive *v-* introduces many of the verses such as "then, because, nevertheless." Note the seven uses of the verb *chalal*, to profane:

-In both vs. 5 and vs. 6 the Lord says that he swore to the Israelites in Egypt which reads literally that he lifted up his hand: the first with respect to being the Lord your God as noted above and the second with respect to bringing Israel from Egypt into a land flowing with milk and honey, this image used first (cf. Ex 3.8) when the Lord addressed Moses for the very first time. Also in the verse at hand this land is called the most glorious one of them all, *tsevy* (cf. 7.20 but not noted there) being a noun which also means a hart or roe.

-Vs. 7: The Lord tells the people before departing Egypt to cast away all detestable things or *shiquts* (cf. 11.18) which their eyes were fastened upon as well as not to defile themselves by the idols of Egypt, *gilulym* (cf. 18.6). Interestingly, the Israelites didn't seem to succumb to this during their four hundred year stay in Egypt which says something about their cohesiveness and leadership though we have no information about it. It simply comes from inference, and we could trust the author of Exodus (traditionally Moses) to mention it. Only when the people had entered the Sinai wilderness and later Canaan did the issue of idolatry arise and plague the nation for generations afterwards.

-Vs. 8: The Lord continues with the theme of Israel's rebellious behavior, *marah* (cf. 5.6) with the preposition *b-*, literally "rebelled in me." One instance of this rebellious attitude is not listening to the Lord in their failure to cast away detestable things and idols. Vs. 8 continues with a second sentence where the Lord muses about pouring out his wrath, *chemah* (cf. 19.12) and spending his anger, '*aph* (cf. 7.8), the two verbs being *shaphak* and *kalah*, 16.36 and 13.15 respectively. This twofold flowing of divine anger is aimed directly at Israel in the midst (*betok*, cf. 16.53) of Egypt from which it would spread throughout the entire land and consume it.

-Vs. 9: The Lord changes his mind for his own sake, that his name not to be profaned or *chalal* (cf. 13.19) among nations in which the Israelites dwelt. This is the first of seven instances in Chapter Twenty and used here with *betok*, on the heels of the *betok* of vs. 8. Since *chalal* fundamentally means to pierce through, the image we can get here is that these nations (*goy*, cf. 2.3) would shoot or sling profanations at the divine

name even though the Lord had made himself known (*yadah*) to Israel by bringing her from Egypt.

-Vs. 10: A simple statement where the Lord brings Israel from Egypt into the wilderness.

-Vs. 11: In the wilderness the Lord gave Israel his statutes and showed them his ordinances, *choq* and *mishpat*, the latter with the verb *yadah* (cf. vs. 9) or to make known. Both nouns are found together in 18.19.

-Vs. 12: The Lord singles out Sabbaths or *shavath* (cf. vs. 3) with the intent that they being a sign (*'oth*, cf. 14.8), these consisting of seven days followed by six of work, a time of reflection. Such reflection or knowing (*yadah* again) has as its aim the fact that the Lord is sanctifying the people, *qadash* fundamentally as to set apart which is the story of the forty years of wandering in the Sinai desert. "Then the nations will know that I the Lord sanctify Israel when my sanctuary is in the midst of them for evermore" [37.28].

-Vs. 13 contains something very familiar to Israel, that the people failed to live up to all this, the Lord singling out their profanation of his Sabbaths, second instance of *chalal* (cf. vs. 9). This verse continues with a second sentence where the Lord had considered (the common verb *'amar* or to say is used) of pouring out his wrath or *chemah* as he had threatened as in vs. 8 which would bring them to a full end, *chalah* also as in vs. 8 but not noted there.

-Vs. 14: A certain desire to protect his name prevented the Lord from this, the third mention of *chalal* (cf. vs. 13). Here he doesn't wish such profanation be done in the sight of those nations who had witnessed this divine threat of extermination.

-Vs. 15: The Lord swore to bring Israel into a land of milk and honey (cf. vs. 6) as well as being the most glorious (*tsevy*, cf. vs. 6) one of them all.

-Vs. 16: Fourth mention of the verb *chalal* or to profane (cf. vs. 14) relative to Sabbaths, this time in conjunction with the collective (singular) heart of Israel (*lev*, cf. 18.31) going after the idols of other nations, *gilulym* (cf. vs. 7).

-Vs. 17: Despite the idolatry depicted in vs. 16, the Lord decides to spare Israel, *chus* (cf. 16.4 as to pity) or more accurately, his eye decides to do this, an indication that the Lord is taking a close look at what he will do moments before he puts it into action. *Chus* is the opposite of *shachath* and *kalah* (16.47 and 13.13 respectively), destroy and full end, the latter being a noun.

-Vs. 18: The Lord warns the children about their fathers, that is, those who had been raised in Egypt, as to not walking in their statutes nor observing their ordinances, *choq* and *mishpat*, the same pair as in vs. 11. He throws in a prohibition against defilement by idols, the verb being *tame'* (cf. 14.11).

-Vs. 19: The Lord commands the sons, not fathers, to walk and observe or *halak* and *shamar* his statutes and ordinances which is opposite of the *halak* and *shamar* (cf. 3.11 and 11.20 respectively) in the previous verse.

-Vs. 20: Hallow the Sabbaths, *qadash* being the verb which as in vs. 12 are a sign or *'oth* relative to knowing (*yadah*) the Lord.

-Vs. 21: However, the children, like their fathers, rebelled against the Lord, *marah* (cf. vs. 8), this rebellion consisting of not observing divine ordinances which thereby makes them profane the Sabbaths, fifth mention of the verb *chalal* (cf. vs. 16).

The second sentence of this verse relative to the Lord pouring out his wrath (*chemah*), is the same as in 13.

-Vs. 22: Sixth mention of *chalal* (cf. vs. 21), here with respect to God's name in the sight of nations and intimating a kind of divine embarrassment.

-Vs. 23: Two similar verbs, scatter and disperse or *puts* and *zarah* (cf. 12.15 and 12.14 respectively).

-Vs. 24: The scattering and dispersing of the previous verses result in Israel not doing the Lord's ordinances but a rejection of his statutes (*mishpat* and *choq* as in vs. 18) and profanation of his Sabbaths. This is the seventh and last mention of *chalal* (cf. vs. 22).

-Vs. 25: Statutes and ordinances (*choq* and *mishpat*, cf. vs. 24) which are different insofar as they are neither good nor have life.

-Vs. 26: The Lord defiles (*tame'*, cf. vs. 18) the people by reason of offering their first-born by fire. Such defilement is designed to cause them horror or *shamam* (cf. 6.4) but ultimately that they know (*yadah*, cf. vs. 20) the Lord.

The conjunctive *v-* ('then') introducing vs. 27 signifies a shift from the above twenty-two verses outlined pertaining to Israel's relationship with the Lord in Egypt as well as in the Sinai wilderness. Now the scene shifts to their entry into Canaan where the Lord bids Ezekiel to speak...to *davar*...to the house of Israel, "house" again signifying a certain domestic unity and family relationship. Ezekiel does comply, of course, but with that same reluctance he had shown to date since the content of the *davar* certainly is less than desirable. The same applies here in vs. 27 when he mentioned how Israel's fathers had blasphemed the Lord, use of *hod* as "again" echoing this as well as the Lord's sentiment. *Gadaph* is the verb at hand which connotes revilement. "Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard with which the servants of the king of Assyria have reviled me" [Is 37.10]. Tied in with *gadaph* is *mahal* (cf. 18.24) or to deal in a treacherous fashion.

In vs. 28 the Lord recounts how he had brought Israel into a land (*erets*, cf. 15.8) he swore to give them, this being rendered literally as "I lifted my hand," a gesture associated as when making an oath. The frequently commented upon tendency of Israel to idol worship, etc., has shown no sign of abetting after forty years of wandering. Right away the people made a beeline for any hill or leafy tree with the provocations offered to native divinities, *kahas* (cf. 16.42) being the noun which connotes displeasure or grief. In both places the people also sent up soothing odors and drink offerings, the former consists of *ruach* or smell, breath with *nychuach* (18.31 and 16.19 respectively) and the latter, *nesek* as in 45.17: "It shall be the prince's duty to furnish the burnt offerings, cereal offerings and drink offerings."

The RSV has vs. 29 in parentheses even though the Lord continues to speak, the purpose being an interjection in the form of a rhetorical question as to which high place (*bamah*, cf. 16.16) the people favor, *Bamah* being the proper name for it; this word occurs very frequently in both First and Second Kings. In the verse at hand, the words "to this day" is both an insult and eyesore for the Lord.

Right after mention of this place of abominations the Lord comes off with two further rhetorical questions, the first in vs. 30 as to the people defiling (*tame'*, cf. vs. 26) themselves in imitation of their fathers in the Sinai desert and the second in vs. 31 as to human sacrifice and defilement by idols, the second use of *tame'* with *gilulym*. No small wonder that the Lord exclaims disgust at being inquired, *darash* (cf. vs. 1).

In vs. 32 the Lord is emphatic in saying that what's in the mind of the people never will come to pass, *ruach* (cf. vs. 28) intimating their spirits. It seems they have paid attention to nations around them, that is, in Canaan, and were tempted sorely to follow their religious practices. Such exotic practices must have been irresistible after so many years in the desert with worship of one God.

Despite this tendency to infidelity, the Lord is determined to govern Israel as king, the phrases "mighty hand" and "outstretched arm" of vs. 33 being typical of the Book of Deuteronomy as in 4.34. In other words, the same lordship exerted there will extend into Canaan but with the condition of divine wrath (*chemah*, cf. vs. 21) being poured out, this being repeated in the next verse (34). Then the Lord throws in a threat that must have terrified the Israelites, that is, by sending them back into the desert and entering judgment with them, *shaphat* (cf. vs. 4) made all the worse by the words "face to face." He's quick to remind the people that he had done this with their fathers in the wilderness as recounted in Chapter Eleven of Numbers.

Vs. 37 reads literally as "I will bring you into the bond of the covenant" or *beryth* (cf. 16.59), that is, restore the original covenant made at Mount Horeb. The next step (vs. 38) is purging rebels and transgressors (*marad* and *pashah* both verbs found in 2.3), *barar* being the verb which means to cleanse. "With the pure you show yourself pure" [Ps 18.26]. Although they won't be permitted to enter the land of Israel, the Lord will bring them from the land of their sojourning (*magor*). "Your statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage" [Ps 119.54]. Note the two different words for "land," *'erets* with regard to *magor* and *'adamah* with regard to Israel. The former can apply to a nation whereas the latter is land in the physical sense. Despite this half promises, if you will, rebels and transgressors will be able to leave the *'erets* of their sojourn, be freed from being part of any allegiance to nations in that place. Still, the earthy-ness of *'adamah* mentioned with regard to Israel intimates the contrast, of what these people are missing. In the end the only thing that matters and transcends these divisions is knowing (*yadah*, cf. vs. 26) the Lord.

Vs. 39 begins with the conjunctive *v-* translated "as for you" with regard to Israel, this small word indicative of fear and concern for those listening. The Lord adopts a somewhat sarcastic tone, giving permission for the people to serve their idols or *gilulym* (cf. vs. 31) if they prefer not listening to him. Even if they opt for this, they won't be able to profane the Lord's name, *chahal* (cf. vs. 24) meaning that despite going through the motions they won't have the slightest effect except to harm themselves.

Vs. 40 has a threefold identity: the Lord's holy mountain, the mountain height of Israel and the land or *'erets*. Note that in vs. 38 *'adamah* is used with regard to Israel. So in this holy place the Lord will both accept and require (*darash* also as to seek; cf. vs. 31 and *ratsah*) Israel's contributions, choicest gifts and sacred offerings. The first verb means to delight or to please and the second suggests an ongoing process of inquiry. These three may be said to correspond to the threefold identity just noted: *terumah*, *re'shyth* and *mas'eth*. The first two are found in 44.30: "And the first of all the first fruits of all kinds and every offering of all kinds from all your offerings shall belong to the priests." As for the third, cf. Ps 141.2: "Let my prayer be counted as incense before you and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice."

In vs. 41 the Lord will accept Israel as an odor (*ruach*) which is pleasing (*nychuach*), both found in vs. 28, the verb at hand being *ratsah* (cf. vs. 40). This will happen once he brings Israel from the peoples and countries and will manifest his holiness, the verb *qadash* (cf. vs. 2) which reads literally "in (b-) you." Such manifestations is not to be done in isolation but in the eyes of the nations who, once Israel has been taken away, will realize that something important in their lives is missing, prompting them to follow. As so often in the Book of Ezekiel, all this has one goal, that of knowing (*yadah*, cf. vs. 38) the Lord which hopefully the nations will do as well.

Vs. 43 intimates clearly that once in the *'erets* of Israel it won't be easy for the people because they will have clear remembrance of their former ways which consist in having polluted themselves, *tame'* (cf. vs. 31). Inevitably this will lead to self-loathing or *qut* found last in 6.9. However, this attitude which can be destructive is offset in vs. 44 by the Lord extending his mercy in the form of knowing (*yadah*) him, this despite the people's evil ways or corrupt doings.

Vs. 45 is vs. 1 of Chapter Twenty-One in the Hebrew.

Vs. 45 begins with the conjunctive *v-* to show that the Lord continues to speak with Ezekiel as he had been doing ever since vs. 2, "*davar* of the Lord" but here in conjunction with the phrase "son of man" (cf. vs. 27). Now in vs. 46 the prophet is to set his face to the south, preach against that direction and prophesy, all three being accomplished as one. The verbs are *sum*, *nataph* and *navy'*; the first and second are found in 15.7 and 13.1 respectively whereas the second implies dropping down, almost a slow drip. It, along with the other two, are found in 21.2: "Set your face toward Jerusalem and preach against the sanctuaries; prophesy against the land of Israel." As for the Negeb forest, the Lord will set it on fire with the intent of scorching all faces from south to north as in vs. 47, the verb *tsarav* also as to be scabby or rough, the only use in the Bible.

Chapter Twenty concludes with Ezekiel coming off this second mediation of the divine *davar* rather quickly or from vs. 45, and shouts out with some alarm that people are calling him a maker of allegories. Apparently he had overheard someone saying this and naturally feels ridiculed. At the same time he can understand it, knowing full well that

the *davar* of which he had just been an instrument is difficult for the people to accept since it tells them too much about their behavior. As for the two words relative to maker and allegories, we have the verb *mashal* (cf. 18.2). Privately Ezekiel hopes his time for being an instrument of the Lord's *davar* has come to a conclusion. Apparently the Lord is showing him not the slightest bit of sympathy. To top it off, by now people are not just talking about him but most likely engaged at a plot to silence him.

Son of man: 4

Davar of the Lord: 3

Thus says the Lord: 6

Know the Lord: 5

1) darash, 4) shaphat, tohevah, yadah, 5) yadah, 6) tsevy, 7) shiquts, gilulyim, 8) marah, chemah, 'aph, shaphak, kalah, betok, 9) chalal, betok, goy, yadah, 11) choq, mishpat, yadah, 12) shavath, 'oth, yadah, qadash, 13) chalal, chemah, chalah, 14) chalal, 15) tsevy, 16) chalal, gilulyim, 17) chus, shachath, kalah, 18) choq, mishpat, tame', 19) halak, shamar, 20) qadash, 'oth, yadah, 21) marah, chalal, chemah, 22) chalal, 24) mishpat, choq, chalal, 25) choq, mishpat, 26) tame', shamam, yadah, 27) gadaph, mahal, 28) 'erets, kahas, ruach, nychuach, nesek, 29) bamah, 30) tame', 31), tame', gilulyim, darash, 32) ruach, 33) chemah, 35) shaphat, 37) beryth, 38) marad, pashah, barar, magor, yadah, 39) gilulyim, chalal, 40) ratsah, darash, terumah, re'shyth, mas'eth, 41) ruach, nychuach, ratsah, 42) qadash, yadah, 43) tame', qut, 44) yadah, 45) sum, nataph, navy', 47) tsarav, 49) mashal

Chapter Twenty-One

1) The **word of the Lord** came to me: 2) "**Son of man**, set your face toward Jerusalem and preach against the sanctuaries; prophesy against the land of Israel 3) and say to the land of Israel, **Thus says the Lord**: Behold, I am against you and will draw forth my sword out of its sheath and will cut off from you both righteous and wicked. 4) Because I will cut off from you both righteous and wicked, therefore my sword shall go out of its sheath against all flesh from south to north; 5) and all flesh shall know that I the Lord have drawn my sword out of its sheath; it shall not be sheathed again. 6) Sigh therefore, **son of man**; sigh with breaking heart and bitter grief before their eyes. 7) And when they say to you, 'Why do you sigh?' you shall say, 'Because of the tidings. When it comes, every heart will melt and all hands will be feeble, every spirit will faint and all knees will be weak as water. Behold, it comes and it will be fulfilled,'" says the Lord God. 8) And the **word of the Lord** came to me: 9) "**Son of man**, prophesy and say, **Thus says the Lord**, Say: A sword, a sword is sharpened and also polished, 10) sharpened for slaughter, polished to flash like lightning! Or do we make mirth? You have despised the rod, my son, with everything of wood. 11) So the sword is given to be polished that it may be handled; it is sharpened and polished to be given into the hand of the slayer. 12) Cry and wail, **son of man**, for it is against my people; it is against all the princes of Israel; they are delivered over to the sword with my people. Smite therefore upon your thigh. 13) For it will not be a testing—what could it do if you despise the rod?" says the Lord God. 14) "Prophesy therefore, **son of man**; clap your hands and let the sword come down twice, yea thrice, the sword for those to be slain; it is the sword for the great slaughter, which encompasses them 15) that their hearts may melt, and many fall at all their gates. I have given the glittering sword; ah!

it is made like lightning, it is polished for slaughter. 16) Cut sharply to right and left where your edge is directed. 17) I also will clap my hands, and I will satisfy my fury; I the Lord have spoken." 18) The **word of the Lord** came to me again: 19) "**Son of man**, mark two ways for the sword of the king of Babylon to come; both of them shall come forth from the same land. And make a signpost, make it at the head of the way to a city; 20) mark a way for the sword to come to Rabbah of the Ammonites and to Judah and to Jerusalem the fortified. 21) For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination; he shakes the arrows, he consults the teraphim, he looks at the liver. 22) Into his right hand comes the lot for Jerusalem, to open the mouth with a cry, to lift up the voice with shouting, to set battering rams against the gates, to cast up mounds, to build siege towers. 23) But to them it will seem like a false divination; they have sworn solemn oaths; but he brings their guilt to remembrance that they may be captured. 24) "Therefore **thus says the Lord God**: Because you have made your guilt to be remembered in that your transgressions are uncovered so that in all your doings your sins appear—because you have come to remembrance, you shall be taken in them. 25) And you, O unhallowed wicked one, prince of Israel, whose day has come, the time of your final punishment, 26) thus says the Lord God: Remove the turban and take off the crown; things shall not remain as they are; exalt that which is low and abase that which is high. 27) A ruin, ruin, ruin I will make it; there shall not be even a trace of it until he comes whose right it is; and to him I will give it. 28) "And you, **son of man**, prophesy and say, Thus says the Lord God concerning the Ammonites and concerning their reproach; say, A sword, a sword is drawn for the slaughter, it is polished to glitter and to flash like lightning—29) while they see for you false visions while they divine lies for you—to be laid on the necks of the unhallowed wicked whose day has come, the time of their final punishment. 30) Return it to its sheath. In the place where you were created, in the land of your origin, I will judge you. 31) And I will pour out my indignation upon you; I will blow upon you with the fire of my wrath; and I will deliver you into the hands of brutal men, skillful to destroy. 32) You shall be fuel for the fire; your blood shall be in the midst of the land; you shall be no more remembered; for I the Lord have spoken."

Vs. 1 of this chapter is 21.6 in the Hebrew text.

The Book of Ezekiel contains forty-eight chapters, a good number of which deal with various sorts of condemnations and warnings directed toward Israel in exile. Ezekiel, of course, is the instrument through which they are transmitted. To date numerous references to the *davar* of the Lord had been made and plenty more lay ahead. As we approach the midway point of the book, many of these oracles of doom can become quite repetitious and difficult to swallow from the point of view of reading them in the spirit of *lectio divina*. For this reason both here and in other chapters full of condemnations, attention will be focused more upon the key phrase “*davar* of the Lord.” The reason? We can view each occurrence the divine *davar* as a take-off point from which the condemnations are dished out. This modest approach may help us to consider them in a fresh light. In this way we may not be dragged down into what amounts to endless boring as well as depressing details.

With this in mind, the chapter at hand has three occurrences of “*davar* of the Lord,” vss. 1, 18 and 18, thereby dividing it up, if you will into three sections. We will begin with vs. 1:

Section One. The *davar* of the Lord doesn't "come" to Ezekiel as noted earlier but "is" to him...i.e., no movement from here to there but a being-with that always was present but more noticeable at a given time as now which has all the characteristics of a *kairos* event. This time the prophet as "son of man" (first of seven references to this phrase in the current chapter) does three things put in temporal sequence but in actuality are one:

- 1) Set his face (cf. 20.46) or *sum* (cf. 20.45) toward Jerusalem.
- 2) Preach against the sanctuaries, *nataph* (cf. 20.45) and *miqdash* (cf. 11.16) or holy place which from the Lord's point of view, it certainly is not.
- 3) Prophecy is directed not just against Israel but it's physical land or '*adamah* compared with '*erets* which suggests nation.

-In vs. 3 Ezekiel is to address this '*adamah* of Israel, that is, the people who had been rooted in their land are to be removed forcefully from it and brought into exile. Thus '*adamah* for Israel in Babylon is a reminder for them, a way of making them feel homesick for it. More specifically the Lord is to use a sword to cut off (*karath*, cf. 14.17) both the righteous and wicked, *tsadyq* and *rashah* (cf. 18.9 and 3.19 respectively) and will do this from south to north. Those listening can understand the Lord doing this to the wicked, but the righteous? Ezekiel himself must have been astonished at these words as he uttered them. Nevertheless, he didn't hesitate but continued with uttering the divine *davar*.

-Vs. 5 has all flesh knowing (*yadah*, cf. 20.44) that not only has the Lord drawn his sword but hasn't returned it to its sheath. In other words, the sword is still out there, threatening the Israelites with doom and gloom.

-No small wonder that the Lord bids his prophet for the second time as "son of man" in vs. 6 to sigh or '*anach* (cf. 9.4) over all this. He does so with both breaking heart and bitter grief which pretty much afflicted him to date, only here in a more specific fashion. The first (*shivron*) has one other biblical reference, Jer 17.18, which means destruction: "Destroy them with double destruction!" It's used with the noun *matnym* (cf. 1.27) or loins used for heart instead of *lev*. The second is *meryroth* or grief which modifies *teu'nym*, both being the only occurrences in the Bible. Ezekiel isn't to do this by himself but in full view of all the people.

-So in vs. 7 when the people ask Ezekiel why he is sighing, it's because of the tidings or news, *shemuah* meaning that which is heard and translated as "rumor" in 7.26. So when this news or rumor reaches everyone, they will be dismayed which is put in terms related to dissolution: melt, be feeble, faint and weak. Vs. 7 ends with the clarity and certainty that this *shemuah* will come and is rendered literally as "and will be." This is not unlike the *davar* of the Lord not coming to Ezekiel but being with him, a fact noted several times already.

Section Two, that is, vs. 9 with regard to "*davar* of the Lord" which doesn't "come" to Ezekiel in vs. 8 but "is" to him.

-Vs. 9: Third instance where the Lord addresses Ezekiel as "son of man" in conjunction with prophesying, *navy'* (cf. 20.45). It involves a sword which seems distinct from the one in vs. 5, this sword being sharpened and polished while the latter is *marat*

which also means sharpened. “It (the sword) is polished to glitter and to flash like lightning” [vs. 28]. Vs. 9 contains a rhetorical sentence as to making mirth in light of the tragedy at hand, *sus*. For another use of this verb refer to Dt 28.63: “The Lord will rejoice over you.”

-The manner by which this sword is destined to be against both the Lord’s people and Israel’s princes (vss. 11-13) shows reluctance to carry out the sentence despite being bound to do so. Vs. 12 has the fourth mention of “son of man” who is to moan over Israel’s fate. Vs. 13 utters the unfortunate words that what is to happen will not be a testing or *bachan* if Israel despises the rod, another way of speaking of the polished sword destined to bring destruction. As for *bachan*, cf. Ps 17.3: “If you try my heart, if you visit me by night, if you test me, you will find no wickedness in me.”

-Vs. 14 has the fifth instance of Ezekiel being addressed as “son of man,” again in conjunction with prophesying or *navy*’ (cf. vs. 9) and with regard to a sword coming down upon Israel three times. In this way (vs. 17) the Lord will satisfy his fury or *chemah* (cf. 20.33).

Section Three, that is, with regard to vs. 18 when again the “*davar* of the Lord” doesn’t “come” to Ezekiel as in vs. 9 but “is” to him. This third and final section of the phrase in Chapter Twenty-One is the longest. It begins with the conjunctive *v-* which isn’t translated but shows by the implied “and” a close, immediate connection between what had just transpired and the current situation.

-Vs. 19 again mentions a sword, this time connected with the king of Babylon (Nebuchadrezzar), it having two ways to come. Ezekiel as “son of man” (the sixth mention of this phrase) is to show the way for this sword, if you will, by making a signpost where the noun *yad* or hand is used. Such a “hand” is to point to Rabbah, Judah and finally Jerusalem.

-Vs. 21: The king of Babylon stands where the two ways divide mentioned in vs. 19 and before advancing further, uses divinization, shakes arrows, consults the teraphim before taking action finally, examines a liver, most likely from a sheep. The words are *qesem* (cf. 13.6) and *teraphim*, the latter being the only use in the Book of Ezekiel. It’s first mention is Judg 17.5 with regard to Micah and for the same purpose as at hand. Such practices were familiar and very attractive to the Israelites while in Babylon which is why the Lord frequently rails against the practice of abominations as pointed out earlier.

-Vs. 23: The various divinizations by the king of Babylon who threatens the Israelites seem false to them, rather ironical, since they too have fallen prey to such practices. That’s why such an attitude evokes a forceful response from the Lord where he brings to mind their guilt (*havon*, cf. 18.19) which, in turn, leads to their eventual demise.

-Vs. 24: Note the hiphil verb form, “caused to be remembered” (*zakar*, cf. 16.60), the agent being Israel’s guilt in such remembrance of transgressions uncovered, *peshah* (cf. 18.28). Another use of *zakar* appears in this verse, niphal ...same notion...but reflective. Both forms of remembrance lead to be taken by the hand, as the Hebrew text says literally.

-Vs. 25 shows the result of such a twofold remembrance, if you will, by calling the prince of Israel (i.e., King Zedekiah) both unhallowed and one who is wicked, *chalal* and *rashah*. The former is found last in vs. 14 as “slain” but not noted there and the latter in vs. 3.

-Vs. 26 continues to address King Zedekiah who is to remove his fine clothing. That which is low will be exalted and that which is abased shall be lifted on high. This sentiment is reminiscent of Mary’s Magnificat: “He has put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of low degree” [Lk 1.52].

-Vs. 27 has the Lord making a ruin of Jerusalem, *havah* occurring three times for emphasis, the only instance in the Bible, and connotes being perverted. The one who is to come or King Nebuchadrezzar will claim it as his right (*mishpat*, cf. 20.25) as given by the Lord himself.

-Vs. 28 has the seventh instance of “son of man” who yet again is urged to prophesy or *navy’* (cf. vs. 14) with regard to the Ammonites as noted in vs. 20 and involves a reproach or *cherpah* (cf. 16.57). As in vs. 15, the sword at hand is polished that it may glitter and flash.

-Vs. 29 has the sword of the previous verse directed toward the Ammonites having false visions and divining lies, *qesem* and *kazav*, vs. 21 and 13.8 respectively. In other words, both the Ammonites and Israelites are in collusion when it comes to such abominable practices.

-Vs. 30: Once the sword has been sheathed, the Lord will pass judgement (*shaphat*, cf. 20.35) in the land of Israel’s place of creation and origin, *maqom* and *mekurah*, 3.12 and 16.3 respectively.

-Vs. 31: The Lord will pour out indignation or *zaham* upon the people. “You are a land that is not cleansed or rained upon in the day of indignation” [22.24]. Such indignation will meted out by those who are skillful in causing destruction, *charash* being a noun as one who engraves. “As a jeweler engraves signets, so shall you engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel; you shall enclose them in settings of gold filigree” [Ex 28.11].

-Vs. 32 concludes this chapter with an utter destruction of Israel, utter in the sense that the people no longer will be remembered (*zakar*, cf. vs. 24). Remembering primarily is an oral thing, stories about one’s heritage being handed down from storey teller to storey teller. If stories are no longer told of a people, that people’s identity slips into oblivion. The Lord puts his seal on this by the familiar “I the Lord have spoken” where *davar* hits home in a special way.

Son of man: 7

Davar of the Lord: 3

Thus says the Lord: 5

Know the Lord: 0

2) sum, nataph, miqdash, 3) karath, tsadyq, rashah, 5) yadah, 6) ‘anach, shivron, matnym, matnym, meryroth, teu’nym, 7) shemuah, 9) navy’, marat, sus, 13) bachan, 14) navy’, 17) chemah, 21) teraphim, qesem, 23) havon, 24) zakar, peshah, 25) chalal, rashah, 27) havah, mishpat, 28) navy’, 28) cherpah, 29) qesem, kazav, 30) maqom, mekurah, shaphat, 31) zaham, charash, 32) zakar

Chapter Twenty-Two

1) Moreover the **word of the Lord** came to me, saying, 2) "And you, **son of man**, will you judge, will you judge the bloody city? Then declare to her all her abominable deeds. 3) You shall say, **Thus says the Lord God**: A city that sheds blood in the midst of her, that her time may come, and that makes idols to defile herself! 4) You have become guilty by the blood which you have shed and defiled by the idols which you have made; and you have brought your day near, the appointed time of your years has come. Therefore I have made you a reproach to the nations and a mocking to all the countries. 5) Those who are near and those who are far from you will mock you, you infamous one, full of tumult. 6) "Behold, the princes of Israel in you, every one according to his power, have been bent on shedding blood. 7) Father and mother are treated with contempt in you; the sojourner suffers extortion in your midst; the fatherless and the widow are wronged in you. 8) You have despised my holy things and profaned my Sabbaths. 9) There are men in you who slander to shed blood, and men in you who eat upon the mountains; men commit lewdness in your midst. 10) In you men uncover their fathers' nakedness; in you they humble women who are unclean in their impurity. 11) One commits abomination with his neighbor's wife; another lewdly defiles his daughter-in-law; another in you defiles his sister, his father's daughter. 12) In you men take bribes to shed blood; you take interest and increase and make gain of your neighbors by extortion; and you have forgotten me, says the Lord God. 13) "Behold, therefore, I strike my hands together at the dishonest gain which you have made and at the blood which has been in the midst of you. 14) Can your courage endure, or can your hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with you? I the Lord have spoken, and I will do it. 15) I will scatter you among the nations and disperse you through the countries, and I will consume your filthiness out of you. 16) And I shall be profaned through you in the sight of the nations; and you shall **know that I am the Lord**." 17) And the **word of the Lord** came to me: 18) "**Son of man**, the house of Israel has become dross to me; all of them, silver and bronze and tin and iron and lead in the furnace have become dross. 19) Therefore **thus says the Lord God**: Because you have all become dross, therefore, behold, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. 20) As men gather silver and bronze and iron and lead and tin into a furnace to blow the fire upon it in order to melt it; so I will gather you in my anger and in my wrath, and I will put you in and melt you. 21) I will gather you and blow upon you with the fire of my wrath, and you shall be melted in the midst of it. 22) As silver is melted in a furnace, so you shall be melted in the midst of it; and you shall know that I the Lord have poured out my wrath upon you." 23) And the **word of the Lord** came to me: 24) "**Son of man**, say to her, You are a land that is not cleansed or rained upon in the day of indignation. 25) Her princes in the midst of her are like a roaring lion tearing the prey; they have devoured human lives; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in the midst of her. 26) Her priests have done violence to my law and have profaned my holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and they have disregarded my Sabbaths so that I am profaned among them. 27) Her princes in the midst of her are like wolves tearing the prey, shedding blood, destroying lives to get dishonest gain. 28) And her prophets have daubed for them with whitewash, seeing false visions and divining lies for them, saying, 'Thus says the Lord God,' when the Lord has not spoken. 29) The people of the land have practiced extortion and committed robbery; they have oppressed the poor and needy and have extorted from the sojourner without redress. 30) And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none. 31) Therefore I have

poured out my indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath; their way have I requited upon their heads, says the Lord God."

This new chapter begins predictably with the conjunctive *v-* translated as “moreover” concerning the *davar* of the Lord coming...being...to Ezekiel. It’s a gloomy conjunctive in that it ties together what went before and the present which contains a whole slew of indictments against Israel. Actually looking beyond this chapter more of the same is in store for the reader, a challenge to situate it in terms of *lectio divina*. One can’t help but feel for Ezekiel as he continues being the medium through which these indictments are transmitted.

Because of the rehash of tragic yet at the same time boring material, the same basic pattern of the last chapter will be followed here, namely, centering around the “*davar* of the Lord.” In sum, this *davar* eases the burden of those indictments leveled against Israel by the Lord. This word occurs three times (vss. 1, 17 and 23) and is divided into the following three sections. Also note *betok* or “in the midst of” which intimates the deep-seated evil within Jerusalem, this work occurring an amazing thirteen times:

Section One (vss. 1-16) where the *davar* of the Lord “is” to Ezekiel, not coming to him, as pointed out several times above. This “is” means it’s impossible for Ezekiel to walk away from the *davar* which would be the case if it “came” to him. Thus there’s no coming nor going from the divine *davar*—inescapable—brought home all the more by the Lord calling him “son of man” in vs. 2. There the Lord puts to him a rhetorical question about judging (*shaphat*, cf. 21.30) the city which isn’t mentioned by name (only once in vs. 19), almost out of embarrassment, but obviously is Jerusalem. Instead, he calls it bloody after which Ezekiel is to declare her abominations, the verb *yadah* (cf. 21.5) being used which is more powerful, to know in the sense of having these *tohevah* (cf. 20.4) put right in her face.

Vs. 3: Without waiting for a response nor expecting one, the Lord bids Ezekiel to point out how the city not just sheds blood but does so right in her midst, *betok* (cf. 20.9) and makes idols to defile herself, *gilulyim* with the verb *tame’* (cf. 20.39 and 20.23 respectively). This is the first mention of *betok*.

Vs. 4: The blood shed *betok* the city along with idol worship has brought near her day, *qarav* (cf. 12.23)...not exactly present but very close to being realized. This is the second mention of *betok* with reference to “day” which goes unspecified by certainly is known by everyone. In this short interval time, nations and countries (*goy* as in 20.9 and *‘erets*) see the city as a reproach, *cherpah* (cf. 21.28). While these peoples have practiced idol worship, they’re exempt from the full brunt of divine wrath and have enough sense to perceive what precisely is going on. Vs. 5 includes with them are those near and far off who will mock the city, *qalas* (cf. 16.31), made all the worse by reason of the preposition *b-*, “mock in you.” The Hebrew has *tame’* as in vs. 3 which means to defile for the English “infamous” with the noun *mehumah* or tumult (cf. 7.7).

Vs. 6 begins with *hineh* (cf. 18.14) or “behold,” astonishment at Israel’s princes intent on shedding blood, the forceful “in you” which corresponds to *betok* the city as noted in vs. 4. This is the third mention of *betok*. The RSV has “according to his power”

which reads literally as “man to his arm,” arm representing strength and showing that each person is doing his best to cause harm.

Vs. 7 singles out three groups which suffer within the city as a result of Israel’s princes:

1) *Qalal* (cf. 21.26 but not noted there as ‘shakes the arrows’) with regard to father and mother.

2) Sojourner (*ger*, cf. 14.7) suffers extortion or *hosheq* (cf. 18.18 but not noted there), singled out as in the city’s *betok* or midst (cf. vs. 3).

3) The fatherless along with the widow being wronged or *yanah* (cf. 18.7). This is the fourth mention of *betok*.

Vs. 8: Two similar verbs, *bazah* and *chalal* (cf. 17.19 but not noted there and 21.25) or to despise and to profane. The former is with regard to holy things or *qodesh*, a noun as in 29.40 but not noted there and the latter is with regard to Sabbaths (cf. 20.24) a noun (cf. 29.40 but noted there).

Vs. 9 brings out the similarity between three groups:

1) Those who slander, *rakyl* here being associated with the shedding of blood as in Prov 11.13: “He who goes about as a tale bearer reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing hidden.”

2) Those who eat upon mountains, indicative of idol worship as in 18.15.

3) Those who commit lewdness or *zimah* (cf. 16.58), this being the fifth mention of *betok*.

Vs. 10 deals with uncovering the nakedness of one’s father which suggests what happened to Noah after the flood as found in Gen 9.20-26 resulting in him cursing Canaan. Also in this verse is condemnation of those who humble women who are unclean in their impurity, the verb *hanah* being used with has multiple meanings, another being found in 14.4 as answer.

Vs. 11: Abominations or *tohevah* (cf. vs. 2) with the wife of one’s neighbor, defilement of daughter-in-law and daughter of one’s father, *tame’* and *hanah* being used respectively (cf. vss. 10 and vs. 3).

Vs. 12: Bribes to shed blood, interest through extortion, *shochad* and *neshek*, both found in Ps 15.5: “Who does not put out his money at interest and does not take a bribe against the innocent.” Right after mentioning these, the Lord interjects with a note of rejection and poignancy, “You have forgotten me (*shakach*).” A similar sentiment is found in 23.35 with the same words.

Vs. 13 begins with *hineh* (cf. vs. 7) or “behold” to show what the Lord is about to do after what he said in the previous verse. He begins by striking together his hands both at dishonest gain (*betsah*, cf. vs. 27) and shed blood. As for the latter, it’s the seventh time mentioned thus far in this chapter and here is used with *betok*, sixth mention.

Vs. 14 has a rhetorical statement addressed out of a certain frustration about the days—note the plural compared with the singular as in vs. 4—when the Lord will deal (*hasah*, cf. 14.25) with his people. Chances are courage (the word for ‘heart’ is used, *lev*, cf. 20.16) won’t endure or *hamad* (cf. 3.23) which literally means to stand.

Vs. 15: note three words relative to dispersal: scatter, disperse and consume or *puts*, *zarah* and *tamam*. The first two are found in 2.23 whereas the latter connotes

coming to an end. “Its (‘bloody city’ or Jerusalem) rust consumed” [24.11]. The object of this consuming is the city’s filth or *tum’ah*, also found in 24.11.

Vs. 16 of the **RSV** has “I shall be profaned” whereas the Hebrew has “you,” the verb being *chalal* (cf. vs. 8) with reference to nations. Despite this, however, the ray of hope as noted elsewhere is that the people will know (*yadah*, cf. vs. 2) the Lord, the sole purpose for this calamity upon calamity which could be avoided.

Section Two or vss. 17-22 with respect to the *davar* of the Lord “being” with Ezekiel. Vss. 18 through 22 have to do with the image of refining or melting.

Vs. 18 calls the house of Israel (second and last mention of the nation in this chapter) *dross* or *syg* which occurs in the next verse.

Vs. 19: Because Israel has become *syg*, the Lord will gather (*qavats*, cf. 16.37) his people in the midst of Jerusalem, *betok* being mentioned the eighth time thus far.

Vs. 20 has the theme of melting Israel as with various metals which the Lord will do after he gathers (*qavats*, cf. vs. 19) the people. Both his anger and wrath (‘*aph* and *chemah*, cf. 20.8 and 21.17 respectively), the former connoting breathing through the nostrils, will bring about such melting.

Vs. 21 has another word for wrath, *havrah* (cf. 21.31 but not noted there), which connotes an outpouring. The result? Israel will be melted in the midst of the Lord’s fire, *betok* being the ninth occurrence in this chapter.

Vs. 22 continues the theme of melting, tenth occurrence of *betok* or with regard to a furnace. The result? That Israel may know or *yadah* (cf. vs. 16) that the Lord has poured out his wrath or *chemah* (cf. vs. 2) upon her, this knowledge making all the difference as for bearing the pain and consequences involved.

Section Three or vss. 23-31 to the end of Chapter Twenty-Two with regard to the *davar* of the Lord “being” with Ezekiel. Vs. 23 stands alone, if you will, as with the first two instances to show its importance.

Vs. 24 contains two images with regard to the purifying nature of water:

1) Israel as a land (‘*erets*, cf. vs. 4) not having been cleansed nor rained upon, *taher* and *goshem*. For the former, cf 24.13: “Because I would have cleansed you and you were not cleansed from your filthiness.”

2) The latter is the only use of this noun in the Bible but closely related to *geshem*, the same meaning or rain in the violence or heavy sense. Both occur at a specific time or “day” which is one of indignation, *zaham* (cf. 21.31).

Vs. 25 reads in the **RSV** as “Her princes” whereas the Hebrew has “a conspiracy of her prophets,” *qesher* being suggestive of treason. “There is a revolt among the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem” [Jer 11.9]. In the verse at hand such a conspiracy/revolt is *betok* “her” or Jerusalem, eleventh occurrence of this word. Those referred to resemble lions devouring people and making widows *betok* the city, twelfth mention.

Vs. 26 is a lengthy condemnation of the priests with the Lord’s complaint of being profaned among the people, *chalal* (cf. vs. 16) and the thirteenth mention of *betok*:

1) Did violence to the law or *chamas* and *torah* (cf. 12.19 and 7.26).

2) Profaned holy things or *chalal* and *qodesh* (cf. vss. 16 and 8).

3) Made no distinction between holy and common or *badal* (cf. 39.14 with *qodesh* and *chol*, the latter also as profane as in 42.20).

4) Made no difference between unclean and clean or *yadah* (cf. vs. 22) with *tame'* and *tahor* (cf. vss. 11 and 36.25).

5) Disregarded Sabbaths or *halam* which fundamentally means to hide. “The Lord has hidden it from me” [2Kg 4.27].

Vs. 27 speaks of princes in the midst or *qerev* (cf. 11.19) Jerusalem, this being different from the familiar *betok* and meaning that which is interior compared with in the middle. There, like wolves, they destroy lives (*nephesh*, cf. 18.20) to obtain dishonest gain, this phrase consisting of the verb *batsah* and the noun *betsah* (cf. 22.12 but not noted there and vs. 13).

Vs. 28 concerns prophets who have daubed themselves with whitewash which is reminiscent of 13.15-16. Once their eyes and inner vision has become clouded, they see visions which are false and divine lies. Now they simulate true prophetic utterances when the Lord hasn't spoken, *davar*. I.e., their daubed vision affects their speech, the transition from seeing to speaking.

Vs. 29 turns attention to the people of Israel in general or those of the land (*'erets*, cf. vs. 24) who have extorted both those in need and the sojourner, the verb being *hashaq* as in 18.18 but not noted there.

Vs. 30 has the Lord having sought (*baqash*, cf. 3.18) to stand on the wall of Jerusalem so that he won't destroy (*shachath*, cf. 20.17) it, that is, both the city and land.

Vs. 31 brings to conclusion Chapter Twenty-Two where the Lord himself sums up what he had done to Israel:

1) Poured out indignation: *shaphak* and *zaham* (cf. 20.8 and vs. 24).

2) Consumed with wrath: *kalah* and *havah* (cf. 20.17 and vs. 21).

3) Requited or the verb *natan* (to give as in 15.7) literally “in (*b-*) their heads.”

Son of man: 3

Davar of the Lord: 3

Thus says the Lord: 2

Know the Lord: 1

2) *shaphat*, *yadah*, *tohevah*, 3) *betok*, *gilulyim*, *tame'*, 4) *qarav*, *betok*, *'erets*, *goy*, *cherpah*, 5) *qalas*, *mehumah*, 6) *hineh*, 7) *hineh*, *qalal*, *ger*, *hosheq*, *betok*, *yanah*, 8) *bazah*, *chalal*, *qodesh*, 9) *rakyl*, *zimah*, *betok*, 10) *hanah*, 11) *tohevah*, *tame'*, *hanah*, 12) *shochad*, *neshek*, *shakach*, 13) *hineh*, *betok*, *betsah*, 14) *hasah*, *lev*, *hamad*, 15) *zarah*, *tamam*, *tum'ah*, 16) *chalal*, 16) *yadah*, 18) *syg*, 19) *syg*, *qavats*, *betok*, 20) *qavats*, *'aph*, *chemah*, 21) *havrah*, *betok*, 22) *betok*, *yadah*, *chemah*, 24) *'erets*, *taher*, *goshem*, *zaham*, 25) *qesher*, *betok*, *betok*, 26) *chalal*, *betok*, *chamas*, *torah*, *chalal*, *qodesh*, *badal*, *qodesh*, *chol*, *yadah*, *tame'*, *tahor*, *halam*, 27) *qerev*, *nephesh*, *batsah*, *betsah*, 29) *'erets*, *hashaq*, 30) *baqash*, *shachath*, 31) *shaphak*, *zaham*, *kalah*, *havah*, *natan*

Chapter Twenty-Three

1) The **word of the Lord** came to me: 2) "**Son of man**, there were two women, the daughters of one mother; 3) they played the harlot in Egypt; they played the harlot in their youth; there their breasts were pressed and their virgin bosoms handled. 4) Oholah was the name of the elder and Oholibah the name of her sister. They became mine, and they bore sons and daughters. As for their names, Oholah is Samaria and Oholibah is Jerusalem. 5) "Oholah played the harlot while she was mine; and she doted on her lovers the Assyrians, 6) warriors clothed in purple, governors and commanders, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding on horses. 7) She bestowed her harlotries upon them, the choicest men of Assyria all of them; and she defiled herself with all the idols of every one on whom she doted. 8) She did not give up her harlotry which she had practiced since her days in Egypt; for in her youth men had lain with her and handled her virgin bosom and poured out their lust upon her. 9) Therefore I delivered her into the hands of her lovers, into the hands of the Assyrians, upon whom she doted. 10) These uncovered her nakedness; they seized her sons and her daughters; and her they slew with the sword; and she became a byword among women when judgment had been executed upon her. 11) "Her sister Oholibah saw this, yet she was more corrupt than she in her doting and in her harlotry which was worse than that of her sister. 12) She doted upon the Assyrians, governors and commanders, warriors clothed in full armor, horsemen riding on horses, all of them desirable young men. 13) And I saw that she was defiled; they both took the same way. 14) But she carried her harlotry further; she saw men portrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chaldeans portrayed in vermilion, 15) girded with belts on their loins, with flowing turbans on their heads, all of them looking like officers, a picture of Babylonians whose native land was Chaldea. 16) When she saw them she doted upon them and sent messengers to them in Chaldea. 17) And the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their lust; and after she was polluted by them, she turned from them in disgust. 18) When she carried on her harlotry so openly and flaunted her nakedness, I turned in disgust from her as I had turned from her sister. 19) Yet she increased her harlotry, remembering the days of her youth, when she played the harlot in the land of Egypt 20) and doted upon her paramours there whose members were like those of asses and whose issue was like that of horses. 21) Thus you longed for the lewdness of your youth when the Egyptians handled your bosom and pressed your young breasts." 22) Therefore, O Oholibah, **thus says the Lord God**: "Behold, I will rouse against you your lovers from whom you turned in disgust, and I will bring them against you from every side: 23) the Babylonians and all the Chaldeans, Pekod and Shoa and Koa and all the Assyrians with them, desirable young men, governors and commanders all of them, officers and warriors, all of them riding on horses. 24) And they shall come against you from the north with chariots and wagons and a host of peoples; they shall set themselves against you on every side with buckler, shield and helmet, and I will commit the judgment to them, and they shall judge you according to their judgments. 25) And I will direct my indignation against you that they may deal with you in fury. They shall cut off your nose and your ears, and your survivors shall fall by the sword. They shall seize your sons and your daughters, and your survivors shall be devoured by fire. 26) They shall also strip you of your clothes and take away your fine jewels. 27) Thus I will put an end to your lewdness and your harlotry brought from the land of Egypt; so that you shall not lift up your eyes to the Egyptians or remember them any more. 28) For **thus says the Lord God**: Behold, I will deliver you into the hands of those whom you hate, into the hands of those from whom you turned in disgust; 29) and they shall deal with you in hatred and take away all the fruit of your labor, and leave you naked and bare, and the nakedness of your harlotry shall be uncovered. Your lewdness and your harlotry 30) have brought this upon you because you played the harlot with the nations and polluted yourself

with their idols. 31) You have gone the way of your sister; therefore I will give her cup into your hand. 32) **Thus says the Lord God:** "You shall drink your sister's cup which is deep and large; you shall be laughed at and held in derision, for it contains much; 33) you will be filled with drunkenness and sorrow. A cup of horror and desolation is the cup of your sister Samaria; 34) you shall drink it and drain it out and pluck out your hair, and tear your breasts; for I have spoken, says the Lord God. 35) Therefore **thus says the Lord God:** Because you have forgotten me and cast me behind your back, therefore bear the consequences of your lewdness and harlotry." 36) The Lord said to me: "**Son of man**, will you judge Oholah and Oholibah? Then declare to them their abominable deeds. 37) For they have committed adultery, and blood is upon their hands; with their idols they have committed adultery; and they have even offered up to them for food the sons whom they had borne to me. 38) Moreover this they have done to me: they have defiled my sanctuary on the same day and profaned my Sabbaths. 39) For when they had slaughtered their children in sacrifice to their idols on the same day they came into my sanctuary to profane it. And lo, this is what they did in my house. 40) They even sent for men to come from far, to whom a messenger was sent, and lo, they came. For them you bathed yourself, painted your eyes and decked yourself with ornaments; 41) you sat upon a stately couch with a table spread before it on which you had placed my incense and my oil. 42) The sound of a carefree multitude was with her; and with men of the common sort drunkards were brought from the wilderness; and they put bracelets upon the hands of the women and beautiful crowns upon their heads. 43) "Then I said, Do not men now commit adultery when they practice harlotry with her? 44) For they have gone in to her as men go in to a harlot. Thus they went in to Oholah and to Oholibah to commit lewdness. 45) But righteous men shall pass judgment on them with the sentence of adulteresses and with the sentence of women that shed blood; because they are adulteresses, and blood is upon their hands." 46) For **thus says the Lord God:** "Bring up a host against them, and make them an object of terror and a spoil. 47) And the host shall stone them and dispatch them with their swords; they shall slay their sons and their daughters and burn up their houses. 48) Thus will I put an end to lewdness in the land, that all women may take warning and not commit lewdness as you have done. 49) And your lewdness shall be requited upon you, and you shall bear the penalty for your sinful idolatry; and you shall **know that I am the Lord God.**"

As noted a number of times earlier with regard to the beginning of a new chapter, we have the *davar* of the Lord "being to" Ezekiel, not "coming to" him. At first glance there appears to be an interval of time in between each occurrence of "being" but from the Lord's point of view, the one uttering *davar*, this doesn't hold true.

It has been noted earlier that the seemingly endless stream of curses and condemnations must be burdensome for Ezekiel...and without a doubt it is...by reason of being the primary agent for the Lord's *davar*. He experiences this pain at once go compared to the drawn out written form through which we are advancing currently. In fact, by now or approximately midway through the book the reader can be challenged to view the text in terms of *lectio divina*. He may take a glance at the ground covered and then look ahead to more curses, etc., and be tempted to give up. The solution? To take refuge in this divine *davar* and hide there not unlike Ezekiel. Only from that vantage point can we make sense of it all. And as noted already, sometimes at the end of a chapter we come across the brief words "know the Lord," know in the intimate sense of *yadah*, which sustains our journey.

A footnote in the RSV says that we're faced with an allegory of two sisters named Oholah and Oholibah. From now on we'll acknowledge them in their translation form, She-Who-Has-A-Tent (i.e., Samaria) and My-Tent-In-Her (i.e., Jerusalem). In this way both names better bring to light what the Lord is communicating through Ezekiel. As verse one says interestingly, the two are daughters of one woman. For reference to this, cf. Jer 3.7: "After she (Israel; Samaria being its capitol) has done all this she will return to me, but she did not return, and her false sister Judah saw it."

Vs. 3 says that both sisters practiced harlotry (*zanah*, cf. 16.35) in Egypt meaning they decided to go their together, perhaps attracted by the multiplicity and exotic nature of gods, etc. Also some of the temples may have had prostitutes affiliated with them, so it was a natural choice to make a living as well as to establish themselves. Already the two had engaged in prostitution while young, possibly having been abused, which set the stage for going down that path. *Mahak* is the verb which means to press upon (concerning their breasts) and has two other biblical references, Lev 22.24 and 1Sam 26.7, the former as "Any animal which has its testicles bruised or crushed or torn or cut, you shall not offer to the Lord or sacrifice within your land." With regard to their virgin booms, the text reads literally as "there they used nipples (*dad*, cf. vs. 8) in their virginity."

Vs. 4 says that She-Who-Has-A-Tent is the elder sister and My-Tent-In-Her is "the name of her sister" or presumably the younger, both of whom became the Lord's or literally "became to (*l-*) me." Then they begot sons and daughters.

Vss. 5-10 goes into the nitty-gritty details concerning the behavior of She-Who-Has-A-Tent, that is, her practice of harlotry while belonging to the Lord which here is rendered as "under me" or under divine protection. While fully aware of this, she didn't hesitate to practice prostitution made all the scandalous while being a mother of children. To make matters worse, She-Who-Has-A-Tent associated with Israel's arch-enemy, the Assyrians, by doting upon them as lovers, *hagav* (cf. vs. 7) meaning fundamentally to blow or to breathe...heavy breathing, if you will, as out of lust.

Among these despised oppressors are young men who are desirable which is rendered as "choice coveted," two nouns consisting of *bachur* (verbal root means to examine, to choose) and *chemed* (verbal root means to desire in the sense of covert). A reference to the first is found in 9.6 but noted there; as for the second, the next occurrence is in vs. 12. Then in vs. 7 She-Who-Has-A-Tent goes after Assyria's choicest or *hagav* (cf. vs. 5). Obviously it was difficult for the Lord to put up with this. However, what galls him is that in the same verse she defiles herself with their idols, *tame'* and *gilulym* (vss. 22.26 & 22.3 respectively), the latter also meaning logs or blocks which is indicative of their constitution as noted in 6.3.

In vs. 8 She-Who-Has-A-Tent didn't relinquish her harlotry while perfecting it in Egypt, the verb *hazav* (cf. 8.12) meaning to forsake or abandon. Then vs. 9 pretty much

restates what she had done as in vs. 5 or when she belonged to the Lord, that is, being a prostitute with the Assyrians or literally “sons of Assyria,” a phrase which has a way of identifying her with them and making her harlotry all the more contemptible. Thus She-Who-Has-A-Tent shuttled, if you will, between two major powers of the time, Egypt and Assyria, bypassing Israel which is in between them. However, she fell into a trap which she couldn’t escape, this having been set a long time ago and now is about to spring. That is to say, the “sons of Assyria” exposed her nakedness, slew her children—and these can include those born in both Egypt and Assyria—and after this humiliation, put her to the sword. Finally vs. 10 says that the memory of She-Who-Has-A-Tent became a byword among women, the noun *shem* (cf. 16.14) or name. That name isn’t given but possibly related the one given her thus far with emphasis upon “tent” in the sense that she moved freely and widely in order to ply her trade.

In vs. 11 attention shifts from She-Who-Has-A-Tent to My-Tent-In-Her and continues through vs. 25 after which both are dealt with together. If the former sister is bad enough, the latter turns out to be worse, for she’s presented as being more corrupt (*shachath*, cf. 22.30). Apparently My-Tent-In-Her had been paying close attention to She-Who-Has-A-Tent and copied her harlotry (*zanah*, cf. vs.3). That means she had followed her sister into Egypt and well as Assyria. Not only did she do this with the Assyrians but with their military leaders and young men who were desirable which reads literally as “men of desire” or *chemed* (cf. vs. 6). Reference to these leaders suggests that My-Tent-In-Her accompanied the Assyrian army on various expeditions and that she was exposed to a wide variety of peoples, much more so than her sister.

Vs. 14 has My-Tent-In-Her amplifying her harlotry further, that is, she caught sight of Chaldean men portrayed in vermillion upon a wall, this color being a brilliant red and therefore highly suggestive in the sexual sense. These images resembled officers or *shalysh* (cf. vs. 25) which literally means a third and easily recognizable as coming from Chaldea. Vs. 16 depicts her as being aroused by such images which made her send messengers to that land who returned with an immediate response, by this time her reputation having been well established. So after having come to My-Tent-In-Her—and here is where her name comes into full realization—these men who had been depicted in bright red polluted her, *tame’* (cf. vs. 7). After this she became disgusted, this being rendered by the verb *yaqah* (cf. vs. 18) which means to be dislocated or alienated along with *nepesh* (cf. 22.27) or soul. “And Jacob’s thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled with him” [Gen 32.25].

Vs. 18 has the Lord stepping in at the critical juncture when My-Tent-In-Her openly flaunted her harlotry, the verb *galah* (cf. 16.36) being used twice for emphasis, something like “utterly uncovered.” He couldn’t but help but turn away in disgust as he had done with her sister She-Who-Has-A-Tent, this being indicated by the verb *naqah* as in the previous verse. She wasn’t affected in the least; in fact as vs. 19 says, she increased her harlotry, *ravah* (cf. 11.6), when she recalled her youthful days in Egypt. Then vs. 20 comes right out with one of the most condemning words possible, calling her clients asses and any illegitimate children horses. So when confronted with the Lord,

She-Who-Has-A-Tent pined for her youthful lewd behavior, the verb *paqad* meaning to frequent or to visit which she did in her mind. “After many days you will be mustered” [38.8]. The time she has in mind pertains to Egypt which literally is rendered “from Egypt.” As for the verb “pressed,” it comes off as “for the sake of,” both most likely errors.

Finally in vs. 22 the Lord directly addresses She-Who-Has-A-Tent for the inevitable which she must have known was in store for her. She could tell this by use of *hineh* (cf. 22.13) or “behold,” a direct way of getting her wayward attention. The Lord will arouse those lovers whom she turned from in disgust, *hur* also meaning to awaken and its only use in Ezekiel. “I will stir up the Medes against them” [Is 13.17]. The sense of *hur* is intensified by use of the preposition *hal*, “upon you.” Right after this we have the Lord make them surround She-Who-Has-A-Tent, the noun *savyv* as “every side” (cf. 5.7 along with another *hal*). Apparently she had taken stock of her obscene behavior hearkening back to vs. 18 when she perceived the Lord taking notice. Even though these former lovers are ranged against her, including a whole host of nations and officials as in vs. 22, this comes from the Lord. The consequences may be dire but ultimately end in both her and her sister knowing (*yadah*) the Lord as the last verse of this chapter indicates. However, she is in for a rough ride between now and then.

Vs. 24 continues describing this combined assault against She-Who-Has-A-Tent, most likely with her sister My-Tent-In-Her looking on in horror but with some relief it isn't her. In sum, the Lord intends to entrust judgment to this assorted group of miffed lovers, the verb *shaphat* and the noun *mishpat* (cf. 22.2 and 21.7 respectively). If the source of this judgment were divine, it could be endured. However, the Lord is clear on one thing, that these peoples will impose their own judgement which is far harsher and longer lasting.

The dreaded *shaphat* and *mishpat* inflicted upon She-Who-Has-A-Tent by all sorts of nations and people as agents of the Lord's indignation is described in detail starting with vs. 25. *Qin'ah* (cf. 16.42) is the noun here which fundamentally means jealousy here with the preposition *b-*, “in you.” Such jealousy takes the human form of fury or *chemah* (cf. 22.22), again with the preposition *b-*, both examples indicative of how penetrating is the ferocity unleashed against her. Not only is she the object of this anger but her survivors which in Hebrew is “sons.” It's all designed to remove lewdness or *zimah* (cf. 22.9) as well as harlotry acquired in Egypt. The real cure, if you will, which isn't evident right now but will be later is that She-Who-Has-A-Tent will no longer remember the Egyptians. In this case forgetfulness will be her salvation.

The next phase in this unfolding of divine fury through the mediation of nations continues unabated in vs. 28, the Lord handing over She-Who-Has-A-Tent to those from whom she turned away in disgust. The noun *nepshesh*—her soul or very self (cf. vs. 17)—is used with the verb *naqah* found in vs. 18 as applicable to the Lord. What's really at issue is stated in vs. 30, that she had not only prostituted herself to the nations but

polluted herself with their idols, *tame'* and *gilulym*, these two words more or less hand-in-hand as in vs. 7.

In vs. 31 the Lord compares She-Who-Has-A-Tent with her sister My-Tent-In-Her and will give the latter's cup into her hand, symbolic of suffering and pain. "Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink" [Mt 20.22]? Vss. 32 through 34 form a song, if you will, where she will drink from her sister's cup which consists of horror and desolation, *shamah* and *shemamah* (cf. 19.4 and 15.8 respectively). After this She-Who-Has-A-Tent will do violence to herself, this concluding in vs. 34 with the Lord having spoken or *davar*. Immediately after the Lord has *davar*, he speaks again in vs. 35, accusing She-Who-Has-A-Tent of having forgotten him. What's even worse is that she cast him behind her back, a gesture which makes her bear the consequences of her lewdness and harlotry, "consequences" not in the Hebrew.

After having dealt with one sister and then another, in vs. 36 the Lord bids Ezekiel to do what he was dreading he'd have to do, that is, judge between the two sisters, *shaphat* (cf. vs. 24). He does this by making known to them right up front their abominable deeds, *toevah* (cf. 22.11), the verb *nagad* suggestive of this. "Declare all that you see to the house of Israel" [40.4]. Not only have both sisters committed adultery, they did so with their idols or *gilulym* (cf. vs. 3) and the sacrifice of their sons which is made all the more poignant by reason of them having been born to the Lord.

Vs. 38 speaks of defiling the Lord's sanctuary most likely located in Jerusalem and profaned his Sabbaths, the verbs being *tame'* and *chalal* (vs. 30 and 22.26 respectively), this theme tending to dominate the rest of the chapter. Once they sacrificed their children to their idols which to them became more urgent, they sent messengers to people far off in order to engage in illicit behavior made all the worse by it being done in the sanctuary. In fact, the two sisters set up the sanctuary as a house of prostitution, adorning it, etc. From the outside people could hear the sounds of a carefree multitude, *hamon* (cf. 7.11) modified by *shalev* which means to be at ease. "Behold, these are the wicked; always at ease, they increase in riches" [Ps 73.12]. So these worthless men along with drunkards (the RSV says 'uncertain') from the wilderness, adorned the two sisters with crowns, etc.

After having been asked to judge between the two sisters in vs. 36, in vs. 43 Ezekiel asks aloud a rhetorical question about men committing adultery with them. The only bright spot in this whole tangled affair is that righteous men (*tsadyq*, cf. 21.3) will pass judgment upon them, *shaphat* (cf. vs. 36) not only because they are committing adultery, but because they have blood on their hands.

In vs. 46 the Lord bids Ezekiel to bring a host against them, *qahal* being the noun which usually refers to a sacred assembly and possibly implies that here but as an armed group of men. Something similar is noted in vs. 24, "host of people" coming against She-Who-Has-A-Tent. The notion of an assault is brought home by two similar sounding words, the verb *halah* (to go up, cf. 14.3) and the preposition *hal-* or upon. This *qahal*

is to make the two sisters a terror and spoil, *zahvah* and *baz*. As for the former, cf. Dt 28.25: “And you shall be a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth.” As for the latter, cf. 7.21 but not noted there.

This host or *qahal* is to destroy the two sisters and offspring, a drastic way by which the Lord will bring an end not just to their lewdness or *zanah* (cf. vs. 11) but the one in the land. Hopefully it will serve as a warning to other women. So while vs. 47 has the host putting a full end to the two sisters, vs. 49 has them still alive. That is to say, the two sisters as representative of Samaria and Jerusalem nevertheless will have people of similar propensities toward lewdness. However, the Lord will requite them, literally as to give their lewdness upon them as well as bearing the sins of their idolatry. Then and only then...at long last...the two sisters or the two peoples they represent, will know (*yadah*, cf. 22.30) the Lord.

Son of man: 2

Davar of the Lord: 1

Thus says the Lord: 4

Know the Lord: 1

3) *zanah*, *mahak*, *dad*, 5) *hagav*, 6) *hagav*, *bachur*, *chemed*, 7) *hagav*, *tame'*, *gilulym*, 8) *hazav*, 10) *shem*, 11) *shachath*, *zanah*, 15) *shalysh*, 17) *yaqah*, *nephesh*, 18) *galah*, *naqah*, 19) *ravah*, 21) *paqad*, 22) *hineh*, *hur*, *savyv* 24) *shaphat*, *mishpat*, 25) *qin'ah*, *chemah*, 27) *zimah*, 28) *nephesh*, *naqah*, 30) *tame'*, *gilulym*, 31) *shamah*, *shemamah*, 36) *shaphat*, *tohevah*, 37) *gilulym*, 38) *tame'*, *chalal*, 42) *hamon*, *shalev*, 43) *tsadyq*, *shaphat*, 46) *qahal*, *halah*, *zahvah*, *baz*, 48) *zanah*, 49) *yadah*

Chapter Twenty-Four

1) In the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, the **word of the Lord** came to me: 2) "**Son of man**, write down the name of this day, this very day. The king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day. 3) And utter an allegory to the rebellious house and say to them, **Thus says the Lord God**: Set on the pot, set it on, pour in water also; 4) put in it the pieces of flesh, all the good pieces, the thigh and the shoulder; fill it with choice bones. 5) Take the choicest one of the flock, pile the logs under it; boil its pieces, seethe also its bones in it. 6) "Therefore **thus says the Lord God**: Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose rust is in it and whose rust has not gone out of it! Take out of it piece after piece, without making any choice. 7) For the blood she has shed is still in the midst of her; she put it on the bare rock, she did not pour it upon the ground to cover it with dust. 8) To rouse my wrath, to take vengeance, I have set on the bare rock the blood she has shed that it may not be covered. 9) Therefore **thus says the Lord God**: Woe to the bloody city! I also will make the pile great. 10) Heap on the logs, kindle the fire, boil well the flesh and empty out the broth and let the bones be burned up. 11) Then set it empty upon the coals that it may become hot, and its copper may burn, that its filthiness may be melted in it, its rust consumed. 12) In vain I have wearied myself; its thick rust does not go out of it by fire. 13) Its rust is your filthy lewdness. Because I would have cleansed you and you were not cleansed from your filthiness, you shall not be cleansed any more till I have satisfied my fury upon you. 14) I the Lord have spoken; it shall come to pass, I will do it; I will not go back, I will not spare, I will not repent; according to your

ways and your doings I will judge you, says the Lord God." 15) Also the **word of the Lord** came to me: 16) "**Son of man**, behold, I am about to take the delight of your eyes away from you at a stroke; yet you shall not mourn or weep nor shall your tears run down. 17) Sigh, but not aloud; make no mourning for the dead. Bind on your turban and put your shoes on your feet; do not cover your lips nor eat the bread of mourners." 18) So I spoke to the people in the morning, and at evening my wife died. And on the next morning I did as I was commanded. 19) And the people said to me, "Will you not tell us what these things mean for us, that you are acting thus?" 20) Then I said to them, "The **word of the Lord** came to me: 21) `Say to the house of Israel, **Thus says the Lord God**: Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the pride of your power, the delight of your eyes and the desire of your soul; and your sons and your daughters whom you left behind shall fall by the sword. 22) And you shall do as I have done; you shall not cover your lips nor eat the bread of mourners. 23) Your turbans shall be on your heads and your shoes on your feet; you shall not mourn or weep, but you shall pine away in your iniquities and groan to one another. 24) Thus shall Ezekiel be to you a sign; according to all that he has done you shall do. When this comes, then you will **know that I am the Lord God.**' 25) "And you, **son of man**, on the day when I take from them their stronghold, their joy and glory, the delight of their eyes and their heart's desire and also their sons and daughters, 26) on that day a fugitive will come to you to report to you the news. 27) On that day your mouth will be opened to the fugitive, and you shall speak and be no longer dumb. So you will be a sign to them; and they will **know that I am the Lord.**"

The Hebrew text begins with the conjunctive *v-* as “and” along with *davar* of the Lord “being” to Ezekiel as is the case with the previous chapter. Once the primacy of *davar* is established, a specific date is given as derived from it and directed toward it, that is to say, working from the year to the month and to the day. Vs. 2 specifies “this day” (in essence a *kairos* event as noted a number of times earlier) by adding “this very day,” *hetsem*. As noted regarding 2.3 as a noun it means bone and is used twice to drive home the gravity of the situation...“the bone of the day,” if you will, or its very essence which is destined to be an intense encounter. *Samak* is the verb for lay siege and fundamentally means to place or to uphold. “Those who support Egypt shall fall, and her proud might shall come down” [30.6].

With this time frame put in place, vs. 3 sets the tone for the rest of Chapter Twenty-Four which centers around an allegory Ezekiel as son of man is to utter. This allegory is rendered by the verb *mashal* (cf. 20.49) directed to Israel as a rebellious house, *mery* (cf. 17.12). The idea of a house or *beyth* suggests a family unit where all the members join in rising up against the Lord. Thus the rebellion is up close and personal. This household unit referring to Israel has in store for it a pot into which the best parts of meat, that is, the people, are to be placed and boiled. Jerusalem is the pot which the Babylonians have laid siege to and set on fire, an anti-image, as it were, of a sacrifice taking place within that city’s temple.

Throughout the graphic details the phrase “thus says the Lord” occurs four times. Each instance may be taken as a focal point around which these details are grouped, giving the people listening to them the prospect of hope despite the harsh *davar* coming from Ezekiel’s mouth. All have their attention fixed ultimately upon “they will know the Lord” as the concluding verse of what went before. As noted earlier, if it weren’t for

these interjections this chapter would be quite difficult to approach from the vantage point of *lectio divina*.

The second instance of “thus says the Lord” is in vs. 6 where the Lord expresses woe or ‘oy (cf. 16.23) with regard to Jerusalem as being bloody, that is, from within, for soon it will be this way doubly so once the Babylonians breach the walls. The blood shed already within Jerusalem is in her midst (*betok*, cf. 22.26) or very center and left there without being covered.

The third instance of “thus says the Lord” is in vs. 9 prefaced with another woe or ‘oy as in vs. 6. Here the Lord threatens to make the pile of bodies great, this being described in some detail with emphasis upon Jerusalem’s filthy lewdness in vs. 13 or *zimah* (cf. 23.27). Despite this, the Lord offers to cleanse her, *tahar*. “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your impurities” [36.25]. However, the city rejected this offer which caused the Lord considerable regret, forcing him to satisfy his anger. This is rendered literally as “to rest my fury in you,” the verb *nuach* and *chemah* both as in 16.42.

Almost as if to put what had just transpired behind him, in vs. 14 the Lord says that he has spoken or *davar*...enough is enough. Nevertheless, the result of this *davar* will come to pass, and he will do what’s necessary to bring an end to the evil originating with Jerusalem which is being inflicted from without. The Lord is adamant. He will not go back, spare nor repent, *parah*, *chus* (cf. 20.17) and *nacham* (cf. 16.54). As for *parah*, it also means to loose, to let go as well as to be naked. “And you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof” [Prov 1.25]. So despite the horrendous account thus far, the action of all three results in the Lord passing judgment upon Jerusalem, *shaphat* (cf. 23.43). Perhaps by this time the people were so numbed that they could care less.

Having had enough with Jerusalem but by no means finished with her, in vs. 15 the Lord turns attention to Ezekiel which may have surprised him since he has been going along without respite in uttering the Lord’s condemnations. He begins with *hineh* (cf. 23.22) or behold to get his attention by saying that he’s about to remove the delight of his eyes or *machmad* (cf. vs. 21) at one stroke, *magephah* also meaning a plague. “For this time I will send all my plagues upon your heart” [Ex 9.14]. So despite the incredibly corrupt condition of Jerusalem, Ezekiel retains a love for it and her people.

The Lord cautions Ezekiel neither to mourn nor to weep, *saphad* and *bakah*, the former suggestive of beating one’s breast, both verbs found next in vs. 23. However, he’s permitted to sigh but not show it, ‘*anaq* also as to strangle which has three other biblical references, one of which is 26.15: “Will not the coast lands shake at the sound of our fall when the wounded groan, when slaughter is made in the midst of you?” In other words, Ezekiel isn’t to assume the air of a mourner. Then suddenly as well as a kind of footnote, vs. 18 has the prophet speaking (*davar*) to the people who presumably are survivors of the Babylonian assault upon Jerusalem. The footnote part of this verse is

after having spoken with the people in the morning, Ezekiel's wife—no name is given—died in the evening. Very straight-forward followed by him resuming the next morning what he was commanded to do.

In vs. 19 the people or apparent survivors ask a natural question of Ezekiel, namely, the meaning of the horrendous events they've come through and why he is acting as he is. This isn't the first time; they did so in 12.9 and 21.7. Such obtuseness is remarkable at this point through we can be sure of one thing. More condemnations are to follow. Such a dreary prospect brings home the necessity, pretty much in the absolute sense, of the insertions of "thus says the Lord." They serve to hold together the text, especially when attempting to plow through the wearisome parts in the spirit of *lectio divina*, and more importantly, hold out hope.

As for the question posed in vs. 19, Ezekiel responds predictably (but apparently not for the people) that the *davar* of the Lord came to him which launches him to come out with more condemnations by the Lord. This time the Lord will profane his temple, *chalah* (cf. 23.38) being the verb. Although important to the Lord, it assumed pride-of-place for the people insofar as it was the desire (*machmad*, cf. vs. 16) of their collective soul (*nephesh*, cf. 23.28). Once obliterated by the invading Babylonians, there's no need to mourn or weep or *saphad* and *bakah* as in vs. 16. What's left is for the people to stew in their own juices, the result of their own iniquities or *havon* (cf. 21.23).

While the Lord is speaking through Ezekiel as he has been doing all along, vs. 24 has the Lord speaking of him, that is, he is to be a sign or *mopheth* (cf. 12.11). That is to say, the people are to do what he does which isn't yet manifest but when it is, they will know (*yadah*, cf. 23.49) the Lord. This is a new slant on the familiar *yadah* which the Israelites haven't heard before, leaving them in some suspense.

Vs. 25 speaks of the day when the Babylonians will conquer Jerusalem though that remains unspecified even to Ezekiel. He calls the city by four names:

1) Their joy or *mesus* as in Ps 48.2: "His holy mountain, beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth."

2) Their pride or *tiph'arah* (cf. 16.17).

3) Delight of eyes or *machmad* (cf. vs. 21).

4) Desire of heart or *masa'* which fundamentally means burden or anything lifted up (cf. 12.10 but not noted there). In the verse at hand, this word applies to *nephesh* as in vs. 21.

Although these four pertain to Jerusalem, chances are they're more centered around the temple located there. Vs. 26 mentions a fugitive bringing news of Jerusalem's fall, literally as a bringing to ears, that is, to Ezekiel who is in Babylon. *Palyt* (cf. 14.21) refers to one who has escaped the ruin and perhaps one of the first exiles. Obviously Ezekiel and other Israelites knew this would be Jerusalem's fate, for earlier they had witnessed the departure of the Babylonian army. Word quickly got out as to its

destination. In the meanwhile, he and his countrymen had to lay low else they might be treated the same way the army would treat those whom they encountered.

Once this fugitive reported to Ezekiel, no longer will he be dumb which refers to the muteness imposed upon him in 3.26: “and I will make your tongue cleave to the roof of your mouth so that you shall be dumb and unable to reprove them; for they are a rebellious house.” This seems to refer to Ezekiel being commanded to refrain from offering his own opinion on the matter and is independent of his mission to communicate the *davar* of the Lord. Now with news of Jerusalem’s plight Ezekiel can speak, this being alighted with the divine *davar* and hence a sign or *mopheth* (cf. vs. 24) to those Israelites in Babylon. As is the case with the conclusion of other chapters, the one at hand concludes with all that preceded is directed to knowing (*yadah*, cf. vs. 24) the Lord.

Son of man: 3

Davar of the Lord: 1

Thus says the Lord: 4

Know the Lord: 2

2) hetsem, samak, 3) mashal, mery, 6) ‘oy, 7) betok, 13) tahar, zimah, nuach, chemah, 14) parah, chus, nacham, shaphat, 16) hineh, machmad, magephah, saphad, bakah, 17) ‘anaq, 21) chalal, machmad, nephesh, 23) saphad, bakah, havon, 24) mopheth, yadah, 25) mesus, tiph’arah, machmad, masa’, nephesh, 26) palyt, 27) mopheth, yadah

Chapter Twenty-Five

1) **The word of the Lord** came to me: 2) **"Son of man**, set your face toward the Ammonites and prophesy against them. 3) Say to the Ammonites, Hear the **word of the Lord God: Thus says the Lord God**, Because you said, ‘Aha!’ over my sanctuary when it was profaned and over the land of Israel when it was made desolate and over the house of Judah when it went into exile; 4) therefore I am handing you over to the people of the East for a possession, and they shall set their encampments among you and make their dwellings in your midst; they shall eat your fruit, and they shall drink your milk. 5) I will make Rabbah a pasture for camels and the cities of the Ammonites a fold for flocks. Then you will **know that I am the Lord**. 6) For **thus says the Lord God**: Because you have clapped your hands and stamped your feet and rejoiced with all the malice within you against the land of Israel, 7) therefore, behold, I have stretched out my hand against you and will hand you over as spoil to the nations; and I will cut you off from the peoples and will make you perish out of the countries; I will destroy you. Then you will **know that I am the Lord**. 8) **"Thus says the Lord God**: Because Moab said, Behold, the house of Judah is like all the other nations, 9) therefore I will lay open the flank of Moab from the cities on its frontier, the glory of the country, Beth-jeshimoth, Baal-meon and Kiriathaim. 10) I will give it along with the Ammonites to the people of the East as a possession that it may be remembered no more among the nations, 11) and I will execute judgments upon Moab. Then they will **know that I am the Lord**. 12) **"Thus says the Lord God**: Because Edom acted revengefully against the house of Judah and has grievously offended in taking vengeance upon them, 13) therefore **thus says the Lord God**, I will stretch out my hand against Edom and cut off from it man and beast; and I will make it desolate; from Teman even to Dedan they shall fall

by the sword. 14) And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel; and they shall do in Edom according to my anger and according to my wrath; and they shall know my vengeance, says the Lord God. 15) "Thus says the Lord God: Because the Philistines acted revengefully and took vengeance with malice of heart to destroy in never-ending enmity; 16) therefore thus says the Lord God, Behold, I will stretch out my hand against the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethites, and destroy the rest of the seacoast. 17) I will execute great vengeance upon them with wrathful chastisements. Then they will know that I am the Lord when I lay my vengeance upon them."

This relatively short chapter begins a series of oracles and lamentations which continue pretty much through Chapter Thirty-Two, no small part of the Book of Ezekiel. Already we've come through a whole lot of them as pertaining to Israel and more specifically her capitol, Jerusalem. The prospect of putting this material at the service of *lectio divina* is daunting, no question about it, considering their volume and intensity. Nevertheless, the text at hand will push on, hopefully making this and the following chapters more palatable.

One way we can approach this is to do an experiment. In essence it consists in singling out the three phrases noted at the end of each chapter and being mindful of them and the context in which they occur. They are "son of man," *davar* of the Lord" and "thus says the Lord." As points of reference we can better situate the slew of curses, condemnations and the like, while clustering notations around them. The order of each is in accord with the text: the first having two references, the second having one and the third with seven. Seven is quite a lot for a short chapter, so this phrase will be of special importance. With regard to the verb "say," it's not *davar* but '*amar* as to bring forth or to bring to light. Somehow it lacks the power of *davar* even though both are used commonly with regard to the Lord. And why not? He should have two general modes of addressing his people.

We could add a fourth dimension, the verb *yadah* or to know in the intimate sense. It occurs five times in this chapter and represents the ultimate goal of what the Lord is trying to get through his thick-headed people.

"*Davar* of the Lord" opens this chapter prefaced with the conjunctive *v-*, not translated, but intimates as it always does when at the beginning of chapters a close connection between what had just happened and what is transpiring at the moment. As in other instances at the beginning of a chapter it translates literally as "And the *davar* of the Lord is to me" meaning that *davar* and Ezekiel aren't fused but may be taken as one and the same. As for the conjunctive at hand, we could interpret it as a short break...a very short one between the last and current chapters. In this way Ezekiel can catch his breath before launching out into a new-yet-old *davar*; new because it comes from the Lord and old in that essentially involves the same old string of condemnations as in the past which in actuality are quite boring.

In vs. 2 Ezekiel is to set his face toward (*'el-* or to) the Ammonites first mentioned in 21.20 and then to prophesy against them, this being similar to 21.1 (*sum* and *navy*'?).

Although Ezekiel is the mouthpiece for the Lord's *davar*, here he does it with the prophesying added, the two actions performed as one. We can assume that the Ammonites are assembled and are paying attention to the prophet standing before them. As for the *davar-navy*' at hand, it's the first instance of "thus says the Lord."

In vs. 3 the Lord accuses the Ammonites of saying "aha" or 'ach (the only other biblical reference of this exclamation is 6.11 as 'alas') which here is a gesture of contempt. They do it with regard to three things:

- 1) The Lord's sanctuary or *miqdash* (cf. 21.2) when it was profaned (*chalal*, cf. 24.21).
- 2) Desolation of the land ('*adamah*, the physical land) of Israel, the verb being *shamam* (20.26).
- 3) The exile of Judah, *golah* (cf. 12.11 but not noted there).

These three result in the Ammonites being handed over to people of the East (*Qedem*, also preposition for 'before') which, as a footnote to the NIV has it, could be desert tribes or King Nebuchadnezzar. They are to become their possession or *morashah* (cf. 11.15). Even worse, these peoples are to encamp in the midst of the Ammonites which is rendered as *bak* or "in you" and is used twice for emphasis. There they shall take advantage of the land's produce but with the sole intent of knowing (*yadah*, cf. 24.27) the Lord. The importance of this *yadah* is found again vs. 8 which seems in contrast to the Lord making the Ammonites perish and being destroyed, a double whammy, if you will. Although such a fate awaits them, there's consolation that such *yadah* with regard to the Lord transcends even life itself. And so the second mention of "thus says the Lord" in vs. 6 serves as an introduction to this *yadah* and brings it to completion.

Vs. 8 begins with the third mention of "thus says the Lord" with regard to an oracle against Moab which also will be given to the people of the East (cf. vs. 4) as a possession or *morashah*. However, it will have a more devastating result in that no longer will Moab be remembered among the nations after the Lord has passed judgment or *shphatym* which is rendered as in the plural (cf. 16.41 but not noted there). Still, this extreme case is done in the same way as with the Ammonites as in the previous verse, namely, to know or *yadah* that "I am the Lord."

Next in line in vs. 12 is Edom which is prefaced by the fourth mention of "thus says the Lord." Edom had acted revengefully against the house of Judah, again "house" with its domestic connotation making it more personal. This verse begins with the fifth mention of "thus says the Lord," that is, quick on the heels of the previous verse. Such revenge is expressed by double use of the verb *naqam* (cf. 24.8 but not noted there). The same applies with regard to the verb 'asham or to be offended which also means to be guilty, to fail in duty. It's found last in 6.6 as laying waste. Yet again, an instance where *yadah* comes into place with regard to the Lord which here is tied in with the Lord's wrath or *chemah* (cf. 24.13).

The fourth and last group of people to feel the Lord's wrath are the Philistines in vs. 15 and are introduced by the sixth mention of "thus says the Lord." The seventh and final instance occurs right afterwards or in the next verse. The Philistines acted in a revengeful manner and took vengeance, the verb *naqam* being used twice as in vs. 12 along with the noun derived from it, *neqamah*; all three are strung out together making for a forceful statement. As for this noun, it's in the next verse along with *tokachath* (cf. 5.15 but not noted there) meaning chastisement or correction. And as has been noted, the ultimate goal of this is to know (*yadah* cf. vs. 8) the Lord, this verb concluding the chapter as it does with many others.

Son of man: 1

Davar of the Lord: 2

Thus says the Lord: 7

Know the Lord: 4

2) sum, navy', 3) miqdash, chalal, 'adamah, shamam, golah, 4) morashah, 5) yadah, 7) yadah, 8) morashah, shphatym, yadah, 12) naqam, 'asham, chemah, 15) naqam, neqamah, tokachath, yadah

Chapter Twenty-Six

1) In the eleventh year, on the first day of the month, the **word of the Lord** came to me: 2) "**Son of man**, because Tyre said concerning Jerusalem, 'Aha, the gate of the peoples is broken, it has swung open to me; I shall be replenished now that she is laid waste,' 3) therefore **thus says the Lord God**: Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and will bring up many nations against you as the sea brings up its waves. 4) They shall destroy the walls of Tyre, and break down her towers; and I will scrape her soil from her, and make her a bare rock. 5) She shall be in the midst of the sea a place for the spreading of nets; for I have spoken, says the Lord God; and she shall become a spoil to the nations; 6) and her daughters on the mainland shall be slain by the sword. Then they will **know that I am the Lord**. 7) "**For thus says the Lord God**: Behold, I will bring upon Tyre from the north Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses and chariots and with horsemen and a host of many soldiers. 8) He will slay with the sword your daughters on the mainland; he will set up a siege wall against you and throw up a mound against you and raise a roof of shields against you. 9) He will direct the shock of his battering rams against your walls, and with his axes he will break down your towers. 10) His horses will be so many that their dust will cover you; your walls will shake at the noise of the horsemen and wagons and chariots when he enters your gates as one enters a city which has been breached. 11) With the hoofs of his horses he will trample all your streets; he will slay your people with the sword; and your mighty pillars will fall to the ground. 12) They will make a spoil of your riches and a prey of your merchandise; they will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses; your stones and timber and soil they will cast into the midst of the waters. 13) And I will stop the music of your songs, and the sound of your lyres shall be heard no more. 14) I will make you a bare rock; you shall be a place for the spreading of nets; you shall never be rebuilt; for I the Lord have spoken, says the Lord God. 15) "**Thus says the Lord God** to Tyre: Will not the coast lands shake at the sound of your fall, when the wounded groan, when slaughter is made in the midst of you? 16) Then all the princes of the sea will step down from their thrones and remove their robes and strip off their embroidered garments;

they will clothe themselves with trembling; they will sit upon the ground and tremble every moment and be appalled at you. 17) And they will raise a lamentation over you and say to you, 'How you have vanished from the seas, O city renowned, that was mighty on the sea, you and your inhabitants, who imposed your terror on all the mainland! 18) Now the isles tremble on the day of your fall; yea, the isles that are in the sea are dismayed at your passing.' 19) "For **thus says the Lord God:** When I make you a city laid waste, like the cities that are not inhabited, when I bring up the deep over you, and the great waters cover you, 20) then I will thrust you down with those who descend into the Pit, to the people of old, and I will make you to dwell in the nether world, among primeval ruins, with those who go down to the Pit, so that you will not be inhabited or have a place in the land of the living. 21) I will bring you to a dreadful end, and you shall be no more; though you be sought for, you will never be found again, says the Lord God."

We have another relatively short chapter beginning with the untranslated conjunctive *v-* or "and" with the *davar* of the Lord "being" to Ezekiel, here with a specific time frame as in the case of Chapter Twenty-Four. The oracle at hand pertains to Tyre, a fortified island, which is why vss. 4 uses the images of waves and sea. "Thus says the Lord" occurs four times which means the Lord's *davar* can break down the chapter into four sections, if you will.

The first "thus says the Lord" runs through vs. 6. Because Tyre is boasting openly about Jerusalem being wide open for the taking, it hopes to be replenished, the verb in vs. 2 being *mala'* (cf. 11.6) meaning to fill. In the obvious sense this doesn't happen because already the city had been laid waste presumably by King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon. Nevertheless it presented easy pickings and an opportunity to extend in that inland direction. This boasting of being replenished seems improbable, given what happened to Jerusalem but controlling it gave access to the surrounding territory. Despite such plans, the Lord is against Tyre, *hal-* being the preposition meaning on or upon. This takes the form of many nations arrayed against the seaport town. For the nations to act in accord with the Lord doesn't mean they were conscious of his operation through them.

Keeping in line with the ocean-related imagery noted above, vs. 5 has Tyre as being in the midst of (*betok*, cf. 24.7) of the sea, the pathway to other lands which until now she had used for trading and boasting of the fact at having such economic advantages. However, the "many nations" of vs. 5 will make her a spoil (*baz*, cf. 23.46), this being effected by the Lord having spoken or *davar*. Vs. 6 makes a distinction between Tyre (an island) and her daughters on the mainland, the latter being put to death by the sword. This serves to isolate Tyre from any mainland contacts. As noted so many times, this is not an end in itself despite the tragedy involved. It's done that they know (*yadah*, cf. 25.15) the Lord.

The second "thus says the Lord" runs from vs. 7 through vs. 14. Here the Lord will bring Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon from the north, this being done without him having a clue as to being such an agent. The verses of this section go into the usual details of

destruction with the final threat of never being rebuilt (cf. vs. 14). Section #2 concludes with the seal of approval, “for I the Lord have spoken (*davar*).”

The third “thus says the Lord” runs from vs. 15 through vs. 18 with the Lord speaking directly to Tyre. It concerns princes of the sea (vs. 16) or most likely trading partners who will be appalled at Tyre’s fate, *shamam* (cf. 25.3) also meaning to lay waste. This will make them raise a lamentation or *qynah* (cf. 19.1).

The fourth and final “thus says the Lord” runs from vs. 19 through vs. 21, the end of this chapter. Again we have imagery pertaining to water as to Tyre’s fate, the Pit or *bor* being not unlike the sea. *Bor* can be a cistern, sepulcher or prison. “For they are all given over to death, to the nether world among mortal men, with those who go down to the Pit” [31.14]. In other words, Tyre will no longer have people dwelling in her nor have a place in the land of the living, the second being rendered literally as “I will give beauty.” So despite this dreadful end which the Lord will inflict upon Tyre, *balahah* meaning terror wrought by sudden destruction. “You have come to a dreadful end and shall be no more forever” [27.36]. If this weren’t bad enough, the Lord says that Tyre will be no more and that no one will seek her. This chapter doesn’t close with the hopeful “know or *yadah* the Lord, rather that he has spoken, *na’am* (cf. 14.11) more like an affirmation of what had been done earlier.

Son of man: 1

Davar of the Lord: 1

Thus says the Lord: 4

Know the Lord: 1

2) mala’, 5) betok, baz, 6) yadah, 16) shamam, 17) qynah, 20) bor, 21) na’am, balahah

Chapter Twenty-Seven

1) The **word of the Lord** came to me: 2) "Now you, **son of man**, raise a lamentation over Tyre 3) and say to Tyre who dwells at the entrance to the sea, merchant of the peoples on many coast lands, **thus says the Lord God**: "O Tyre, you have said, 'I am perfect in beauty.' 4) Your borders are in the heart of the seas; your builders made perfect your beauty. 5) They made all your planks of fir trees from Senir; they took a cedar from Lebanon to make a mast for you. 6) Of oaks of Bashan they made your oars; they made your deck of pines from the coasts of Cyprus, inlaid with ivory. 7) Of fine embroidered linen from Egypt was your sail serving as your ensign; blue and purple from the coasts of Elishah was your awning. 8) The inhabitants of Sidon and Arvad were your rowers; skilled men of Zemer were in you, they were your pilots. 9) The elders of Gebal and her skilled men were in you, caulking your seams; all the ships of the sea with their mariners were in you to barter for your wares. 10) "Persia and Lud and Put were in your army as your men of war; they hung the shield and helmet in you; they gave you splendor. 11) The men of Arvad and Helech were upon your walls round about, and men of Gamad were in your towers; they hung their shields upon your walls round about; they made perfect your beauty. 12) "Tarshish trafficked with you because of your great wealth of every kind; silver, iron, tin and lead they exchanged for your wares. 13) Javan, Tubal and Meshech

traded with you; they exchanged the persons of men and vessels of bronze for your merchandise. 14) Beth-togarmah exchanged for your wares horses, war horses and mules. 15) The men of Rhodes traded with you; many coast lands were your own special markets, they brought you in payment ivory tusks and ebony. 16) Edom trafficked with you because of your abundant goods; they exchanged for your wares emeralds, purple, embroidered work, fine linen, coral and agate. 17) Judah and the land of Israel traded with you; they exchanged for your merchandise wheat, olives and early figs, honey, oil and balm. 18) Damascus trafficked with you for your abundant goods because of your great wealth of every kind; wine of Helbon, and white wool 19) and wine from Uzal they exchanged for your wares; wrought iron, cassia and calamus were bartered for your merchandise. 20) Dedan traded with you in saddle cloths for riding. 21) Arabia and all the princes of Kedar were your favored dealers in lambs, rams and goats; in these they trafficked with you. 22) The traders of Sheba and Raamah traded with you; they exchanged for your wares the best of all kinds of spices and all precious stones and gold. 23) Haran, Canneh, Eden, Asshur and Chilmad traded with you. 24) These traded with you in choice garments, in clothes of blue and embroidered work and in carpets of colored stuff, bound with cords and made secure; in these they traded with you. 25) The ships of Tarshish traveled for you with your merchandise. "So you were filled and heavily laden in the heart of the seas. 26) Your rowers have brought you out into the high seas. The east wind has wrecked you in the heart of the seas. 27) Your riches, your wares, your merchandise, your mariners and your pilots, your caulkers, your dealers in merchandise and all your men of war who are in you with all your company that is in your midst sink into the heart of the seas on the day of your ruin. 28) At the sound of the cry of your pilots the countryside shakes, 29) and down from their ships come all that handle the oar. The mariners and all the pilots of the sea stand on the shore 30) and wail aloud over you, and cry bitterly. They cast dust on their heads and wallow in ashes; 31) they make themselves bald for you and gird themselves with sackcloth, and they weep over you in bitterness of soul, with bitter mourning. 32) In their wailing they raise a lamentation for you and lament over you: 'Who was ever destroyed like Tyre in the midst of the sea? 33) When your wares came from the seas, you satisfied many peoples; with your abundant wealth and merchandise you enriched the kings of the earth. 34) Now you are wrecked by the seas in the depths of the waters; your merchandise and all your crew have sunk with you. 35) All the inhabitants of the coast lands are appalled at you; and their kings are horribly afraid, their faces are convulsed. 36) The merchants among the peoples hiss at you; you have come to a dreadful end and shall be no more for ever."

Yet another chapter beginning with the “invisible” conjunctive *v-* which indicates the close connection between the oracle against Tyre and now a lamentation (*qynah*, cf. 26.17) over her fate. As for the three key points of reference (‘son of man,’ ‘*davar* of the Lord’ and ‘thus says the Lord’), they occur all together within the first two verses. As expected, vs. 1 begins with “(and) the *davar* of the Lord” which is “becoming” to Ezekiel. These are important intervals for the prophet, for they give him the opportunity to come up for air, if you will, in between *davar* or words. How long this will continue is not for him to say. This chapter has a certain urgency about it by adding “now” in vs. 2, that is, to “son of man.” It signals a shift from an oracle (though this word isn’t used) in the previous chapter to its completion or more accurately, the response of Tyre’s former trading partners to her fate.

Vs. 2 has Tyre situated at the entrance to the sea, succinctly and accurately put, which means it is squeezed between two invading powers, from the west or the sea and from

the east or the land. *Rakal* is a participle for merchant found last in 17.4 but not noted there. As for the lamentation at hand, Ezekiel is to raise (*nasa'* cf. 19.1) one up which means he will raise his voice in a high pitched manner to bemoan Tyre's fate. And so at the conclusion of what may be taken as a preface to this lamentation we have "thus says the Lord." It serves to free up Ezekiel, if you will, that he may continue.

The root of Tyre's destruction is pride in herself or thinking she's perfect in beauty or the adjective *kalyl* modifying the noun *yophey*. Both are found in 16.14, the same lamentation being made over Jerusalem which makes two guilty of essentially the same grievous fault.

Vs. 4 describes Tyre beautifully, her borders being in the midst of the sea, reflecting her reliance upon trading. Also it intimates that she has no borders as far as land goes but nevertheless has great economic impact inland. From this point on to vs. 9 we have a description of Tyre's magnificence by her builders along with other peoples who served her. Their function differs from both natives of the island city-state and those who have been conquered; they are in her service by reason of her economic might. The same applies in vs. 10 to Persia, Lud and Put as mercenaries who contributed to perfecting Tyre's beauty, the verb *kalal* and the noun *yophey*, this paralleling her boast in vs. 3. As for *kalal*, the only other biblical reference is in vs. 4; from it is derived *kalyl* in vs. 3.

Vss. 12-25 go into some detail as to Tyre's commercial empire, that is, from west to east starting with Tarshish or Spain and extending to Nineveh in modern Iraq. While reading this, one can be overwhelmed by the vast extend of Tyre's economic sway. However, we know from the previous chapter and earlier verses of the current one that it's a kind of set-up for a dramatic fall. It's not unlike what is described in Chapter Eighteen of Revelation, the fall of Babylon: "and the merchants of the earth have grown rich with the wealth of her wantonness" [vs. 3].

After having been dazzled by the splendor and far reach of Tyre, vs. 25 gets right to the point, her fate and reason for Ezekiel's lamentation. Again, from Revelation: "Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! In one hour she has been laid waste" [18.19]. And so Chapter Twenty-Seven concludes with Tyre having come to a dreadful end or *balahah*, the same description as at the end of the previous chapter. Also as noted there as well as here there's no comforting conclusion of knowing (*yadah*) the Lord, just forgetfulness.

Son of man: 1

Davar of the Lord: 1

Thus says the Lord: 1

Know the Lord: 0

2) *nasa'*, *qynah*, 3) *rakal*, *kalyl*, *yophey*, 11) *kalal*, *yophey*, 36) *balahah*

Chapter Twenty-Eight

1) The **word of the Lord** came to me: 2) "**Son of man**, say to the prince of Tyre, **Thus says the Lord God**: "Because your heart is proud, and you have said, 'I am a god, I sit in the seat of the Gods, in the heart of the seas,' yet you are but a man and no god, though you consider yourself as wise as a God—3) you are indeed wiser than Daniel; no secret is hidden from you; 4) by your wisdom and your understanding you have gotten wealth for yourself and have gathered gold and silver into your treasuries; 5) by your great wisdom in trade you have increased your wealth, and your heart has become proud in your wealth—6) therefore **thus says the Lord God**: "Because you consider yourself as wise as a god, 7) therefore, behold, I will bring strangers upon you, the most terrible of the nations; and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom and defile your splendor. 8) They shall thrust you down into the Pit, and you shall die the death of the slain in the heart of the seas. 9) Will you still say, 'I am a god' in the presence of those who slay you though you are but a man and no god in the hands of those who wound you? 10) You shall die the death of the uncircumcised by the hand of foreigners; for I have spoken, says the Lord God." 11) Moreover the **word of the Lord** came to me: 12) "**Son of man**, raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, **Thus says the Lord God**: "You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. 13) You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, carnelian, topaz and jasper, chrysolite, beryl and onyx, sapphire, carbuncle and emerald; and wrought in gold were your settings and your engravings. On the day that you were created they were prepared. 14) With an anointed guardian cherub I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. 15) You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until iniquity was found in you. 16) In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned; so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and the guardian cherub drove you out from the midst of the stones of fire. 17) Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you. 18) By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries; so I brought forth fire from the midst of you; it consumed you, and I turned you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you. 19) All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have come to a dreadful end and shall be no more for ever." 20) The **word of the Lord** came to me: 21) "**Son of man**, set your face toward Sidon and prophesy against her 22) and say, **Thus says the Lord God**: "Behold, I am against you, O Sidon, and I will manifest my glory in the midst of you. And they shall **know that I am the Lord** when I execute judgments in her and manifest my holiness in her; 23) for I will send pestilence into her and blood into her streets; and the slain shall fall in the midst of her by the sword that is against her on every side. Then they will **know that I am the Lord**. 24) "And for the house of Israel there shall be no more a briar to prick or a thorn to hurt them among all their neighbors who have treated them with contempt. Then they will **know that I am the Lord God**. 25) "**Thus says the Lord God**: When I gather the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered and manifest my holiness in them in the sight of the nations, then they shall dwell in their own land which I gave to my servant Jacob. 26) And they shall dwell securely in it, and they shall build houses and plant vineyards. They shall dwell securely when I execute judgments upon all their neighbors who have treated them with contempt. Then they will **know that I am the Lord their God**."

This chapter opens with the “invisible” conjunctive *v-* as noted at the beginning of the last chapter, showing the connection between what transpired there and what is about to unfold here. In other words, more disastrous news is in store for Tyre. The *davar* of the

Lord “becoming” to Ezekiel is both familiar to him as well as getting tiresome at this point. The problem, of course, is that he doesn’t have a clue as to how much more is in store for him. Also he knows that the frequent phrase “son of man” when the *davar* of the Lord is present to him is a way the Lord identifies him with those whom he’s rebuking. That is to say, Ezekiel as a human being is just as much subject to succumbing to their folly as anyone else. Only the divine *davar* keeps his head above the fray.

The text gives the appearance that Ezekiel is to address directly the ruler of Tyre, the NIV identifying him as Ethbaal II, *nagyd* meaning literally someone who is out front (*neged*, the preposition). “Who cuts off the spirit of princes, who is terrible to the kings of the earth” [Ps 76.12]. Being straddled between the Mediterranean Sea and lands to the east, this ruler sees himself in a powerful position, economically speaking. Through him all trade east to west and west to east must pass. This leads naturally to considering himself a god which makes his heart proud, *gavah* being the verb (cf. 17.22) meaning lifted up. Mention of this gives a good idea of the series of condemnation laying ahead. For the Lord, someone considering himself to be a god is especially repugnant meaning the ruler is about to get slammed. In light of this, Ezekiel can’t want to transmit the Lord’s *davar* which is why right away he says “thus says the Lord.”

Vs. 2 continues with the ruler’s heart (*lev*, cf. 22.14) being proud, thinking himself by reason of his coastal position to sit in the heart (*lev*) of the sea, a way of saying that he controls it. Apparently this fellow considers himself to be as wise as the prophet Daniel, mention of him hearkening back to Chapter Fourteen, that is, along with Noah and Job, all known for the righteousness. As for Daniel, we could throw in his gift for prophecy, something the other two didn’t have.

Vs. 3 and beyond continue this barbed attack on Tyre’s ruler who presumably shares the same wisdom and understanding of Daniel. Yet unlike the prophet, the ruler has accumulated wealth which as vs. 5 has it, made his heart become proud, *gavah* (cf. vs. 2). After this set-up, we have the second of five “thus says the Lord.” It would be difficult to imagine Ethbaal II sitting in his palace with these words coming at him from an obscure prophet. It should be noted that the Lord has Ezekiel transmitting his *davar* mostly to nations, cities and Israel but not to rulers. These words weren’t delivered personally as with Moses and the Pharaoh of Egypt because Ezekiel is ensconced safely in Babylon. Yet because he’s the mouthpiece of the divine *davar*, the limitations of time and of space are irrelevant. Ezekiel can *davar* as much as the Lord wishes, even without opening his mouth. “There is no speech nor are their words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world” [Ps 19.3-4].

In vs. 7 the Lord utters “behold” or *hineh* (cf. 24.16), a means of getting attention for something important, namely, the he’s going to bring not just strangers upon the ruler of Tyre but those who are the most terrible among them, *haryts* which comes from a verbal root meaning to tremble. Such peoples aren’t identified but most likely had no economic dealings with Tyre. In fact, they may be considered as pirates who preyed upon her

shipping. “He and his people with him, the most terrible of the nations, shall be brought in to destroy the land” [30.11]. Such barbarians, if you will, will cast the ruler of Tyre into the Pit, *shachath* as in 19.4 but not noted there and derived from a verbal root (same spelling) meaning to corrupt. Note that *bor* is used for Pit in 26.20, more like a cistern. This Pit is the heart of the seas, ironic, because Tyre had held sway over the Mediterranean and now will be at its bottom with her former trading partners not caring.

In vs. 11 the *davar* of the Lord “becomes” to Ezekiel a second time where he as son of man (the second mention of this phrase) is to raise a lamentation or *qynah* just as he done in 27.2. You’d think the previous one would be sufficient, but no. Given Tyre’s great economic influence, it deserves further lament. Situating Tyre in the garden of Eden really pushes it, but is done with regard to the precious stones associated with that place before the expulsion of Adam. Also this is an image opposite to the heavenly Jerusalem in Rev 21.15 which mentions the same precious stones. And so Tyre finds herself between Eden and the heavenly Jerusalem with her praise continuing through vs. 15.

In vs. 16 the *davar* of the Lord takes the expected turn to the worse, that is, through vs. 19 where he calls Tyre a profane thing, *chalal* (cf. 25.3) as cast from God’s mountain. This the RSV identifies as Mount Sapon, sacred to the Canaanites. Her own cherub which acted as a guard did this, paralleling Israel’s story of Eden. Then after a series of curses or the like, those who know Tyre are appalled just as in 26.16 where the same verb *shamam* is used.

In vs. 20 the *davar* of the Lord occurs for a third and final time in this chapter, turning attention toward Sidon which is south of Tyre and allied with Jerusalem against Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon. Despite this alliance, the Lord seems to divest Israel of all foreign entanglements so as be a nation exclusively set aside for herself, this being in accord with the original plan of salvation. Ezekiel is to set his face in the direction of Sidon and prophesy, something he hadn’t been asked to do against Tyre, and begins with “thus says the Lord,” this being the third use of the phrase. Although the expected condemnation is railed against this city, it comes off better than Tyre, possibly due to her alliance with Israel. The Lord will do three things:

1) Manifest his glory (*kavad*, cf. 27.25 but not noted there) in her very midst or *betok* (cf. 26.5).

2) Sidon’s inhabitants will know (*yadah*, cf. 26.6) the Lord when he executes judgments or *shephet* in her (cf. 25.11 but not noted there).

3) Manifest his holiness in her, the verb *qadash* being used (cf. 20.42). Note two uses of the preposition *b-* (in) in #2 and #3 compared with *betok* in #1.

The above mentioned in-ness of the Lord with regard to Sidon is countered by the opposite kind of in-ness which in vs. 23 concerns pestilence, blood and the slain. Nevertheless, it’s done for the purpose of knowing the Lord, *yadah*, this one in contrast yet parallel to its mention in vs. 22.

From vs. 24 to the conclusion of this chapter the Lord turns attention to Israel. With Tyre out of the way (recall that the **RSV** in vs. 20 has Sidon as Jerusalem's ally), she too will *yadah* the Lord.

In vs. 25 the Lord says that he'll gather Israel from where she had been scattered (*qavats/puts*, the two being used together as in 11.7. While this twofold gesture is being effected, the Lord will reveal his holiness (*qadash*, cf. vs. 22) in the eyes the nations, this verb fundamentally meaning to set apart. In other words, when the nations see Israel withdrawn from them and living in the land which the Lord had given Jacob (cf. 37.25), they will know that she is protected from further assault. The word "securely" is used twice with regard to living in Jacob's place of inheritance and rendered literally as "they shall dwell to trusting in me." These words convey a certain permanence and continuity which is realized once the Lord executes judgments (*shepheth*, cf. vs. 22) upon their neighbors. Then and only then Israel will know (*yadah*, cf. vs. 24) that the Lord is their God. They had realized this before, of course.

Mention of the patriarch Jacob in vs. 25 is an important factor here and to remember what the Lord has said to him of the land is vital: "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants" [Gen 28.13]. Jacob had *yadah* of this fact and now Israel has the same *yadah*. The problem remains, however, of maintaining it in awareness and transmitting it to future generations.

Son of man: 3

Davar of the Lord: 3

Thus says the Lord: 5

Know the Lord: 4

2) *gavah*, lev, 5) *gavah*, 7) *hineh*, *haryts*, 8) *bor*, 12) *qynah*, 16) *chalal*, 19) *shamam*, 22) *kavad*, *betok*, *yadah*, *shepheth*, *qadash*, 23) *yadah*, 24) *yadah*, 25) *qavats*, *puts*, *qadash*, 26) *shepheth*, *yadah*

Chapter Twenty-Nine

1) In the tenth year, in the tenth month, on the twelfth day of the month, the **word of the Lord** came to me: 2) "**Son of man**, set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt and prophesy against him and against all Egypt; 3) speak, and say, **Thus says the Lord God**: "Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lies in the midst of his streams that says, 'My Nile is my own; I made it.' 4) I will put hooks in your jaws and make the fish of your streams stick to your scales; and I will draw you up out of the midst of your streams with all the fish of your streams which stick to your scales. 5) And I will cast you forth into the wilderness, you and all the fish of your streams; you shall fall upon the open field and not be gathered and buried. To the beasts of the earth and to the birds of the air I have given you as food. 6) "Then all the inhabitants of Egypt shall **know that I am the Lord**. Because you have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel; 7) when they grasped you with the hand, you broke, and tore all

their shoulders; and when they leaned upon you, you broke, and made all their loins to shake; 8) therefore **thus says the Lord God:** Behold, I will bring a sword upon you and will cut off from you man and beast; 9) and the land of Egypt shall be a desolation and a waste. Then they will **know that I am the Lord.** "Because you said, 'The Nile is mine, and I made it,' 10) therefore, behold, I am against you and against your streams, and I will make the land of Egypt an utter waste and desolation from Migdol to Syene, as far as the border of Ethiopia. 11) No foot of man shall pass through it, and no foot of beast shall pass through it; it shall be uninhabited forty years. 12) And I will make the land of Egypt a desolation in the midst of desolated countries; and her cities shall be a desolation forty years among cities that are laid waste. I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them among the countries. 13) "For **thus says the Lord God:** At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the peoples among whom they were scattered; 14) and I will restore the fortunes of Egypt and bring them back to the land of Pathros, the land of their origin; and there they shall be a lowly kingdom. 15) It shall be the most lowly of the kingdoms and never again exalt itself above the nations; and I will make them so small that they will never again rule over the nations. 16) And it shall never again be the reliance of the house of Israel, recalling their iniquity when they turn to them for aid. Then they will **know that I am the Lord God.**" 17) In the twenty-seventh year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the **word of the Lord** came to me: 18) "**Son of man,** Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon made his army labor hard against Tyre; every head was made bald and every shoulder was rubbed bare; yet neither he nor his army got anything from Tyre to pay for the labor that he had performed against it. 19) Therefore **thus says the Lord God:** Behold, I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall carry off its wealth and despoil it and plunder it; and it shall be the wages for his army. 20) I have given him the land of Egypt as his recompense for which he labored because they worked for me, says the Lord God. 21) "On that day I will cause a horn to spring forth to the house of Israel, and I will open your lips among them. Then they will **know that I am the Lord.**"

This new chapter begins with a very specific time frame starting from year to month to day, the last instance being Chapter Twenty-Six, and unlike that, the current chapter doesn't begin with the conjunctive *v-*. It shifts to Egypt and stays on that theme through Chapter Thirty-Two. That means the *davar* of the Lord which "becomes" to Ezekiel is a different experience...different in that he's communicating with one of the local superpowers...but similar in that it contains pretty much the same boring stuff.

Ezekiel is to set (*sum* as in 28.21) his face against (*hal*, literally as upon) the unnamed Pharaoh of Egypt, that is, all the way from his location in Babylon through Israel and across the Sinai wilderness. In other words, he's going to turn westward and not budge until the prophesy is over. Despite the distance, this *sum* isn't subject to the limitations of time and space by reason of being agent of the divine *davar*, that being noted in the last chapter. Not only is he to do this to Pharaoh but to Egypt which includes prophesying against both. Indeed, those in between will also hear Ezekiel. Following this *sum* or placing in position along with prophesying is *davar* which consists in "thus says the Lord."

Vs. 3 pretty much sums up the present *davar* quite well as the Lord addresses Pharaoh directly as being against (*hal* or upon as in vs. 2) him. Pharaoh is likened to the Nile's great dragon or *tanyu* which generally applies to a sea monster but most likely means a

crocodile. Also crocodiles were the object of worship there, so it's natural for this beast to claim the Nile as his own, the source of all life for Egypt. It's the only occurrence in the Bible though close to a noun with the same spelling but in the plural. "That you should have broken us in the place of jackals (*tany*m and covered us with deep darkness" [Ps 44.19]. So the Lord catches Pharaoh the crocodile, if you will, and casts him upon the land where his corpse will feed the beasts and birds. Such removal from the life-giving waters of the Nile is a sure sign that the fertile land along its banks will dry up and succumb quickly to the surrounding desert.

The entire nation of Egypt will witness this and will know (*yadah* cf. 28.26) that the Lord is putting an end to their semi-divine ruler. This, of course, can't help but make the Egyptians recall Israel's departure from Egypt several centuries earlier, to realize that the Lord is still very much active. How could they forget him for having destroyed their army in the Red Sea?

As for the image of a reed on which Israel leaned, cf. Is 36.6: "Behold, you are relying on Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of any man who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who rely on him." Then in vs. 8 we have "thus says the Lord" as to Egypt becoming both a desolation and a waste, *shemamah* and *charbah* both found in vs. 10. Once reduced to this state of almost nothingness...predictably and ultimately with gratitude...that country will *yadah* (cf. vs. 6) the Lord.

This theme of desolation is mentioned in the next few verses (9-12) followed by a period of forty years (reminiscent, of course, of Israel's wandering in the Sinai for the same period) of Egypt having been scattered among nations and diminished considerably. Then...and this is the second time in a row...Egypt will *yadah* the Lord. It can't be emphasized enough that *yadah* is the Only Thing that matters, more precious than life itself.

Vs. 1 opened with a specific time frame of ten years, ten months and twelve days whereas vs. 17 opens with the twenty-seventh year, first month and first day of the month. On that day King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon will invade Egypt, this presumably after that country was reduced to virtual nothingness. It will be a recompense or *phulah* for having been in the Lord's service though most likely this king was unaware of the fact. As for *phulah* in vs. 20, cf. Ps 28.5: "Because they do not regard the works of the Lord."

Chapter Twenty-Nine concludes on a positive note for Israel. That is to say, "that day" is mentioned which presumably is when Nebuchadrezzar takes over Egypt which had been laid waste and greatly diminished. This is in light of the time frame of vs. 17 when a horn will spring forth for (*l-*, literally as 'to') the house of Israel, *qeren* being a symbol of strength (cf. 27.15 but not noted there). Simultaneous with this the Lord will open the lips of Israel among them, *betok* (cf. 28.22) or the very center, most likely referring to the Babylonians who from Ezekiel's perspective, is holding Israel captive in exile. So

once the horn springs forth and Israel's lips are opened, they will *yadah* (cf. vs. 16) the Lord.

Son of man: 2

Davar of the Lord: 2

Thus says the Lord: 4

Know the Lord: 4

1) sum, 3) tanym, 6) yadah, 8) shemamah, charbah, 9) yadah, 16) yadah, 21) qeren, betok, yadah

Chapter Thirty

1) The **word of the Lord** came to me: 2) "**Son of man**, prophesy and say, **Thus says the Lord God**: "Wail, `Alas for the day!" 3) For the day is near, the day of the Lord is near; it will be a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations. 4) A sword shall come upon Egypt, and anguish shall be in Ethiopia when the slain fall in Egypt and her wealth is carried away and her foundations are torn down. 5) Ethiopia and Put and Lud and all Arabia and Libya and the people of the land that is in league shall fall with them by the sword. 6) "Thus says the Lord: Those who support Egypt shall fall, and her proud might shall come down; from Migdol to Syene they shall fall within her by the sword, says the Lord God. 7) And she shall be desolated in the midst of desolated countries and her cities shall be in the midst of cities that are laid waste. 8) Then they will **know that I am the Lord** when I have set fire to Egypt, and all her helpers are broken. 9) "On that day swift messengers shall go forth from me to terrify the unsuspecting Ethiopians; and anguish shall come upon them on the day of Egypt's doom; for, lo, it comes! 10) "**Thus says the Lord God**: I will put an end to the wealth of Egypt by the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon. 11) He and his people with him, the most terrible of the nations, shall be brought in to destroy the land; and they shall draw their swords against Egypt and fill the land with the slain. 12) And I will dry up the Nile, and will sell the land into the hand of evil men; I will bring desolation upon the land and everything in it by the hand of foreigners; I, the Lord, have spoken. 13) "**Thus says the Lord God**: I will destroy the idols and put an end to the images in Memphis; there shall no longer be a prince in the land of Egypt; so I will put fear in the land of Egypt. 14) I will make Pathros a desolation and will set fire to Zoan and will execute acts of judgment upon Thebes. 15) And I will pour my wrath upon Pelusium, the stronghold of Egypt, and cut off the multitude of Thebes. 16) And I will set fire to Egypt; Pelusium shall be in great agony; Thebes shall be breached, and its walls broken down. 17) The young men of On and of Pibeseth shall fall by the sword; and the women shall go into captivity. 18) At Tehaphnehes the day shall be dark when I break there the dominion of Egypt, and her proud might shall come to an end; she shall be covered by a cloud, and her daughters shall go into captivity. 19) Thus I will execute acts of judgment upon Egypt. Then they will **know that I am the Lord**." 20) In the eleventh year, in the first month, on the seventh day of the month, the **word of the Lord** came to me: 21) "**Son of man**, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and lo, it has not been bound up, to heal it by binding it with a bandage, so that it may become strong to wield the sword. 22) Therefore **thus says the Lord God**: Behold, I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt and will break his arms, both the strong arm and the one that was broken; and I will make the sword fall from his hand. 23) I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them throughout the lands. 24) And I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put my sword in his hand; but I will break the arms of Pharaoh, and he will

groan before him like a man mortally wounded. 25) I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh shall fall; and they shall **know that I am the Lord**. When I put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon, he shall stretch it out against the land of Egypt; 26) and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries. Then they will **know that I am the Lord**."

This chapter begins with the conjunctive *v-* which isn't translated and like other instances noted thus far, intimates a continuation from just went before, that is, concerning Egypt. After the Exodus, this country became a favorite whipping boy for the Israelites but must be remembered for having sheltered generously them for some four hundred years when Jacob brought his family there to escape famine. As for Ezekiel, by this time he is quite familiar with these various interludes or when the Lord's *davar* comes to him followed by what seems to be a pause in the action and moving on again to yet another *davar*. They function not unlike a *selah* or pause as found in the Psalms that appear from time to time, this word possibly having a liturgical context.

Again, the *davar* of the Lord "becomes" to Ezekiel who's bidden to prophesy against that country which he does with the expected "thus says the Lord God." He shouts out the need to wail or *yalal* which connotes a howling not unlike a dog (cf. 21.12 but not noted there). Such a loud, persistent noise is "for the day" which vs. 3 says is near or *qarov*, this intimating that the day is approaching, and one can detect it at some distance. Also *qarov* is mentioned twice meaning something really disastrous is about to happen not just for Egypt but for all nations, a time of doom which is rendered literally as "time for nations."

After speaking of the impending doom for Egypt as well as Ethiopia and those in league with Egypt, we have the second "thus says the Lord" in vs. 6 which concerns those who support Egypt, *samak* (cf. 24.2). Turning attention to Egypt, the primary focus of the Lord's *davar*, it will end up being desolated or *shamam* (cf. 28.19) in the very midst of (*betok*, cf. 29.21) countries similarly devastated; the same applies to her cities where the verb *charav* (cf. 12.20) is used meaning to be laid waste. Yet once more there is hope. Vs. 8 says this is for the purpose of *yadah* the Lord.

Vs. 9 continues the theme of "that day" noted in vs. 2 when the Lord will terrify the Ethiopians on the day (second mention) of Egypt's doom, *charad* (cf. 26.16 but not noted there; connotes trembling) and *chalchalah* or pain which has two other biblical references, Is 21.3 and Nah 2.10, the former being cited here: "Therefore my loins are filled with anguish."

It turns out the doom in store for Egypt will be meted out by King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon...no surprise there...who along with his people are described in vs. 11 as the most terrible of nations, *haryts* (cf. 28.7) also meaning to tremble. One manifestation of this horror is that the Babylonians will dry upon the Nile, source of life for all Egypt. Again the verb *shamam* in vs. 12 is used for the desolation wrought by the Lord through this foreign agent.

In vs. 13 the Lord will destroy Egypt's idols or *gilulym* (cf .23.37) which is interesting since that country usually hasn't come in for condemnation of idol worship. Canaan is the chief culprit; Israel, although in exile in Babylon, doesn't seem to have been affected by such worship despite four hundred years of residing there. And so the Lord continues to rail against Egypt through vs. 18, destroying this and then that. Then in vs. 18 he will execute acts of judgment (*shaphat*, cf. 24.14) upon that land which you think would have been so devastated that no one was left to be judged. Next we have the real purpose of all this which has become the hallmark of how the Lord works, that the Egyptians will *yadah* him...that is, if anyone is left for this *yadah* as has been the case with previous incidents. From this we could say that *yadah* is for a tiny minority of survivors.

Vs. 20 has a specific time frame for the *davar* of the Lord to "become" Ezekiel, the last one being 29.1: the eleventh year->first month->seventh day, the last one being 29.1: tenth year->tenth month-> twelfth day. Implied is an interval between the two, a *selah* if you will. The Lord informs his prophet that he has broken Pharaoh's arm or power and scatter his people among nations, pretty much as the Israelites had been scattered with some living in Babylon. Conversely, the Lord will strengthen the arm of King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon who will use his sword against Egypt or what happens to remain of it. Again, despite the thoroughness of destruction and scattering involved, it's aimed for *yadah* the Lord which concludes this chapter.

Son of man: 2

Davar of the Lord: 2

Thus says the Lord: 4

Know the Lord: 4

2) yalal, 3) qarov, 6) samak, 7) shamam, betok, charav, 8) yadah, 11) harats, 12) haryts, shamam, 13) gilulym, 19) shaphat, yadah, 26) yadah

Chapter Thirty-One

1) In the eleventh year, in the third month, on the first day of the month, the **word of the Lord** came to me: 2) "**Son of man**, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his multitude: "Whom are you like in your greatness? 3) Behold, I will liken you to a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches and forest shade and of great height, its top among the clouds. 4) The waters nourished it, the deep made it grow tall, making its rivers flow round the place of its planting, sending forth its streams to all the trees of the forest. 5) So it towered high above all the trees of the forest; its boughs grew large and its branches long from abundant water in its shoots. 6) All the birds of the air made their nests in its boughs; under its branches all the beasts of the field brought forth their young; and under its shadow dwelt all great nations. 7) It was beautiful in its greatness, in the length of its branches; for its roots went down to abundant waters. 8) The cedars in the garden of God could not rival it nor the fir trees equal its boughs; the plane trees were as nothing compared with its branches; no tree in the garden of God was like it in beauty. 9) I made it beautiful in the mass of its branches, and all the trees of Eden envied it that were in

the garden of God. 10) "Therefore **thus says the Lord God**: Because it towered high and set its top among the clouds, and its heart was proud of its height, 11) I will give it into the hand of a mighty one of the nations; he shall surely deal with it as its wickedness deserves. I have cast it out. 12) Foreigners, the most terrible of the nations, will cut it down and leave it. On the mountains and in all the valleys its branches will fall, and its boughs will lie broken in all the watercourses of the land; and all the peoples of the earth will go from its shadow and leave it. 13) Upon its ruin will dwell all the birds of the air, and upon its branches will be all the beasts of the field. 14) All this is in order that no trees by the waters may grow to lofty height or set their tops among the clouds, and that no trees that drink water may reach up to them in height; for they are all given over to death, to the nether world among mortal men, with those who go down to the Pit. 15) "**Thus says the Lord God**: When it goes down to Sheol I will make the deep mourn for it and restrain its rivers, and many waters shall be stopped; I will clothe Lebanon in gloom for it, and all the trees of the field shall faint because of it. 16) I will make the nations quake at the sound of its fall when I cast it down to Sheol with those who go down to the Pit; and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, will be comforted in the nether world. 17) They also shall go down to Sheol with it to those who are slain by the sword; yea, those who dwelt under its shadow among the nations shall perish. 18) Whom are you thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? You shall be brought down with the trees of Eden to the nether world; you shall lie among the uncircumcised, with those who are slain by the sword. "This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, says the Lord God."

The conjunctive *v-* begins this chapter but isn't in the **RSV** and has another specific date working from the eleventh year->first month-> seventh day of the month, the last time reference being 30.20. The time frame is shorter than the previous one which in the context of the *davar* of the Lord is irrelevant. What matters is the introduction of that *selah* or pause noted earlier, pauses between occasions when the divine *davar* comes to Ezekiel.

We continue with Ezekiel as conduit of the divine *davar* which, as noted above, reminds us of Moses communicating with Pharaoh only he did it through his brother Aaron. Before us is an allegory of a cedar of Lebanon renowned for construction of Solomon's temple. The text goes into some detail as to its description, heaping praise upon praise which by this time is a sure sign of trouble laying up ahead. "Therefore" or *laken* is this tell-tale sign along with "thus says the Lord" which changes the praise bestowed to a new round of condemnations. The chief one is that Egypt's heart towered high and had its top above the clouds which in Hebrew reads as "thick boughs [vs. 10]." One way of looking at this is that in her desire to be set on high, Egypt got entangled in thick boughs of her own devices.

The Lord comes along in vs. 11 and gives Egypt-as-cedar into the hands of an unidentified powerful ruler who'll deal with her wickedness or *reshah* (cf. 7.11). Then there's mention of the most terrible of foreigner...nations...*haryts* as in 30.12 which again seem to be the Babylonians.

After describing the destruction of Egypt-as-cedar's branches, etc., in vs. 15 it goes down to Sheol, first mention of this in Ezekiel which may be the same as the Pit (*bor*, cf.

28.8) in vs. 14. As for Sheol, it's found in the next two verses. Along with this Pit and Sheol is a third term, the deep or *tehom* famously noted in Gen 1.2: "The earth was without form and void." Not only will Egypt go to these three places but those who've dwelt under her shadow, that is, her cedar-like branches.

A fourth element may be added, if you will, which consists of those who are not circumcised, this at the end of the chapter. They are already slain and are in the underworld. Such, as the very last words run, is the fate of Pharaoh and the multitude in his service. No room here (unfortunately) for any *yadah* with regard to the Lord.

Son of man: 1

Davar of the Lord: 1

Thus says the Lord: 2

Know the Lord: 0

11) reshah, 12) haryts