

## 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 *gesem* (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, niphil ...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, *gesem* 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 *zahan* 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, *gilulym* 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 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, *zahan* (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, gilulym, 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 acknowledged 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 *gilulyim* (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 *nephesh* (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 *nepesh*—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, *tohevah* (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, *zavah* 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, *magepah* 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, *chalal* (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 witnesses 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 to 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 vs. 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 brier 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 to 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 *shepheth* 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 of 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) gawah, lev, 5) gawah, 7) hineh, haryts, 8) bor, 12) qynah, 16) chalal, 19) shamam, 22) kavah, 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 *tanyim* 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 (*tanyim* 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) tonym, 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 *gilulyim* (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*

## Chapter Thirty-Two

1) In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the first day of the month, the **word of the Lord** came to me: 2) "**Son of man**, raise a lamentation over Pharaoh king of Egypt and say to him: "You consider yourself a lion among the nations, but you are like a dragon in the seas; you burst forth in your rivers, trouble the waters with your feet, and foul their rivers. 3) **Thus says the Lord God**: I will throw my net over you with a host of many peoples; and I will haul you up in my dragnet. 4) And I will cast you on the ground, on the open field I will fling you, and will cause all the birds of the air to settle on you, and I will gorge the beasts of the whole earth with you. 5) I will strew your flesh upon the mountains and fill the valleys with your carcass. 6) I will drench the land even to the mountains with your flowing blood; and the watercourses will be full of you. 7) When I blot you out, I will cover the heavens and make their stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light. 8) All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over you and put darkness upon your land, says the Lord God. 9) "I will trouble the hearts of many peoples when I carry you captive among the nations, into the countries which you have not known. 10) I will make many peoples appalled at you, and their kings shall shudder because of you when I brandish my sword before them; they shall tremble every moment, every one for his own life, on the day of your downfall. 11) For **thus says the Lord God**: The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon you. 12) I will cause your multitude to fall by the swords of mighty ones, all of them most terrible among the nations. "They shall bring to nought the pride of Egypt, and all its multitude shall perish. 13) I will destroy all its beasts from beside many waters; and no foot of man shall trouble them any more nor shall the hoofs of beasts trouble them. 14) Then I will make their waters clear, and cause their rivers to run like oil, says the Lord God. 15) When I make the land of Egypt desolate and when the land is stripped of all that fills it, when I smite all who dwell in it, then they will **know that I am the Lord**. 16) This is a lamentation which shall be chanted; the daughters of the nations shall chant it; over Egypt and over all her multitude shall they chant it, says the Lord God." 17) In the twelfth year, in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the month, the **word of the Lord** came to me: 18) "**Son of man**, wail over the multitude of Egypt, and send them down, her and the daughters of majestic nations, to the nether world, to those who have gone down to the Pit: 19) `Whom do you surpass in beauty? Go down, and be laid with the uncircumcised.' 20) They shall fall amid those who are slain by the sword, and with her shall lie all her multitudes. 21) The mighty chiefs shall speak of them with their helpers out of the midst of Sheol: `They have come down, they lie still, the uncircumcised, slain by the sword.' 22) "Assyria is there and all her company, their graves round about her, all of them slain, fallen by the sword; 23) whose graves are set in the uttermost parts of the Pit, and her company is round about her grave; all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who spread terror in the land of the living. 24) "Elam is there and all her multitude about her grave; all of them slain, fallen by the sword who went down uncircumcised into the nether world, who spread terror in the land of the living, and they bear their shame with those who go down to the Pit. 25) They have made her a bed among the slain with all her multitude, their graves round about her, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword; for terror of them was spread in the land of the living, and they bear their shame with those who go down to the Pit; they are placed among the slain. 26) "Meshech and Tubal are there, and all their multitude, their graves round about them, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword; for they spread terror in the land of the living. 27) And they do not lie with the fallen mighty men of old who went down to Sheol with their weapons of war whose swords were laid under their heads and whose shields are upon their bones; for the terror of the mighty men was in the land of the living. 28) So you shall be broken

and lie among the uncircumcised with those who are slain by the sword. 29) "Edom is there, her kings and all her princes who for all their might are laid with those who are slain by the sword; they lie with the uncircumcised, with those who go down to the Pit. 30) "The princes of the north are there, all of them, and all the Sidonians who have gone down in shame with the slain, for all the terror which they caused by their might; they lie uncircumcised with those who are slain by the sword, and bear their shame with those who go down to the Pit. 31) "When Pharaoh sees them, he will comfort himself for all his multitude, Pharaoh and all his army slain by the sword, says the Lord God. 32) For he spread terror in the land of the living; therefore he shall be laid among the uncircumcised, with those who are slain by the sword, Pharaoh and all his multitude, says the Lord God."

The notations here are quite short, the same pretty much applicable to the last few chapters. Reason: a whole series of condemnations by the Lord against Egypt and other nations. Without a doubt, it makes for difficult reading in accord with the practice of *lectio divina*. Some parts or chapters could be skipped over completely in light of this. However, it's worth pointing out the operation of the Lord and his *davar* through Ezekiel, both of whom are engaged in an extended process they'd rather not be doing yet are compelled to follow through with. If the reader has a tough time plowing through all this...and understandably so...then consider how painful it is for the Lord to be rebuking people almost non-stop.

As with the previous chapter, the one at hand begins with the "invisible" conjunctive *v-* along with a specific time frame, the last beginning Chapter Thirty-One: twelfth year->twelfth month->first day of the month. That, of course, brings up the element of *selah* as a pause for Ezekiel speaking the divine *davar* which now "becomes" to him and addresses him with the familiar "son of man." The lament of this chapter concerns Egypt which continues to bear the full brunt of divine fury and will do so through vs. 19 of this chapter.

Vs. 2 shows the determination of the Lord as following through with his revenge as expressed by a lamentation or *qynah* (cf. 28.12). It's over Pharaoh of Egypt where Ezekiel is bidden to speak to him as in the last chapter. It's the predictable doom and gloom, parts of which are reminiscent of what Jesus says as to "the end" as in Mt 24.29-31. Part of the destruction will be directly by the Lord as just noted and another part by the king of Babylon. Such is the lamentation to be sung by all nations as noted in vs. 16.

Vs. 17 contains another specific time when the *davar* of the Lord "becomes" to Ezekiel: twelfth year->first month (the Hebrew lacks this)->fifteenth day. In other words, this is a welcomed *selah* or pause, if you will, for Ezekiel as a conduit for the Lord's seemingly endless list of condemnations. Next in vs. 18 comes the sending of the Egyptians who as a people will go down to the Pit or *bor* (cf. 28.8), this being identified with Sheol (cf. 31.17) in vs. 21.

The Egyptians will have plenty of company in the Pit: Assyrians, Elam, Meshech, Tubal, Edom and princes of the north, all these being listed in vss. 22-30. When Pharaoh seems them all, he'll derive comfort for having spread terror or *chityth* which derives from a

verbal root meaning to be shattered or dismayed. This noun occurs several times in around this section and is found only in Ezekiel.

Son of man: 2

*Davar* of the Lord: 2

Thus says the Lord: 2

Know the Lord: 1

2) qynah, 18) bor, 32) chityth

### Chapter Thirty-Three

1) The **word of the Lord** came to me: 2) "**Son of man**, speak to your people and say to them, If I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from among them and make him their watchman; 3) and if he sees the sword coming upon the land and blows the trumpet and warns the people; 4) then if any one who hears the sound of the trumpet does not take warning, and the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. 5) He heard the sound of the trumpet and did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But if he had taken warning, he would have saved his life. 6) But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, so that the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any one of them; that man is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand. 7) "So you, **son of man**, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. 8) If I say to the wicked, O wicked man, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. 9) But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way; he shall die in his iniquity, but you will have saved your life. 10) "And you, **son of man**, say to the house of Israel, Thus have you said: `Our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?' 11) Say to them, As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel? 12) And you, **son of man**, say to your people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him when he transgresses; and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall by it when he turns from his wickedness; and the righteous shall not be able to live by his righteousness when he sins. 13) Though I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, yet if he trusts in his righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered; but in the iniquity that he has committed he shall die. 14) Again, though I say to the wicked, `You shall surely die,' yet if he turns from his sin and does what is lawful and right, 15) if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has taken by robbery and walks in the statutes of life, committing no iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. 16) None of the sins that he has committed shall be remembered against him; he has done what is lawful and right, he shall surely live. 17) "Yet your people say, `The way of the Lord is not just'; when it is their own way that is not just. 18) When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall die for it. 19) And when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is lawful and right, he shall live by it. 20) Yet you say, `The way of the Lord is not just.' O house of Israel, I will judge each of you according to his ways." 21) In the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month, on the fifth day of the month, a man who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, "The city has fallen." 22) Now the hand of the Lord had been upon me the evening before

the fugitive came; and he had opened my mouth by the time the man came to me in the morning; so my mouth was opened, and I was no longer dumb. 23) The **word of the Lord** came to me: 24) "**Son of man**, the inhabitants of these waste places in the land of Israel keep saying, 'Abraham was only one man, yet he got possession of the land; but we are many; the land is surely given us to possess.' 25) Therefore say to them, **Thus says the Lord God**: You eat flesh with the blood and lift up your eyes to your idols and shed blood; shall you then possess the land? 26) You resort to the sword, you commit abominations and each of you defiles his neighbor's wife; shall you then possess the land? 27) Say this to them, **Thus says the Lord God**: As I live, surely those who are in the waste places shall fall by the sword; and him that is in the open field I will give to the beasts to be devoured; and those who are in strongholds and in caves shall die by pestilence. 28) And I will make the land a desolation and a waste; and her proud might shall come to an end; and the mountains of Israel shall be so desolate that none will pass through. 29) Then they will **know that I am the Lord** when I have made the land a desolation and a waste because of all their abominations which they have committed. 30) "As for you, **son of man**, your people who talk together about you by the walls and at the doors of the houses, say to one another, each to his brother, 'Come, and hear what the word is that comes forth from the Lord.' 31) And they come to you as people come, and they sit before you as my people, and they hear what you say but they will not do it; for with their lips they show much love, but their heart is set on their gain. 32) And, lo, you are to them like one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument, for they hear what you say, but they will not do it. 33) When this comes—and come it will!—then they will know that a prophet has been among them."

At the beginning of the last chapter with its brief notations mention was made at how difficult it can be to read all these condemnations coming from the Lord. Our only refuge is awareness of the *davar* of the Lord being proclaimed by Ezekiel. They are like rest stops strategically placed in what amounts to as boring passages enabling us to stick with the text and see it through. So by now we're well acquainted with this divine *davar* which can be taken as a presence of the Lord in and among not just his people, the nation of Israel, but their foes. It seems that the reaction of all these groups to this presence determines whether the *davar* for them is benign or otherwise.

Chapter Thirty-Three begins with the "invisible" conjunctive *v-* to show the connection between what has just taken place and the current situation or the divine *davar* "becoming" to Ezekiel as it had numerous occasions. After railing chiefly against the Egyptians, this *davar* must have surprised the prophet since he's to *davar* to his own people or literally "to the sons of your people," "sons" being more intimate.

In vs. 2 the Lord proposes a hypothetical situation as to a watchman and an invasion, this through the image of a sword which the Lord himself brings upon the land of Israel. Those behind city walls (obviously Jerusalem) will have some foreknowledge as to the invasion which is why they place a watchman on the look-out, the participle *tsaphah* (cf. 3.17) being used which means to shine, to be bright as well as to observe accurately. Note that they station just one man, not more, this perhaps indicative of them being over confident in the strength of their fortifications. Once this watchman sees a sword approaching as it glitters in the sun, a fearful spectacle, he blows the trumpet as a warning. Yet should the people fail to heed this warning (the verb being *zahar*, cf. 3.19),

the sword will take away the watchman, not necessarily kill him, most likely leading him into captivity. Given the dire situation, it seems strange for the city's inhabitants not to heed the trumpet warning. However, this seems to be the point of one half of the story. These people are too consumed with business as usual and go about doing it.

The other half of the story is that when the watchman sounds the trumpet, the inhabitants (the text speaks only of one person in both instances) do take heed and thus are saved.

In vs. 6 we have the watchman seeing the sword approaching yet fails to warn the city's inhabitants which causes him to be snatched away in his iniquity or *havon* (cf. 24.23). Nothing is said here of him being put to death as is the case in vs. 4. If the watchman goes into exile, this *havon* will be a worse fate, haunting him to death.

In vs. 7 the Lord directly speaks to Ezekiel himself, the conjunctive *v-* beginning vs. 7 to show how they are connected directly to him. His familiarity with the divine *davar* made him know this was coming, so obviously he's filled with some dread at the prospect of failing at the watchman's job. Yet the pattern the Lord gives is familiar: whenever he hears a *davar* he is to warn the people. Note two uses of the preposition "from" with respect to the Lord: "from my mouth" and "warning from me," this helping to put Ezekiel on his guard.

In vs. 8 the Lord takes the position of the sword, if you will, coming against the city. So when Ezekiel fails to give proper warning to the wicked person—the *davar* will replace the trumpet blast—that man will die. However, the Lord will require blood at the hand of Ezekiel, but the prophet himself won't perish. *Baqash* (cf. 22.30) is the verb in vs. 8 which also means to seek. The opposite holds true. That is to say, if Ezekiel gives warning and the person involved fails to live up to it, he will die, and Ezekiel will save his life. The verb here is *natsal* with *nephesh* (cf. 14.17 and 24.25 respectively) which means soul.

In vs. 10 the Lord addresses Ezekiel directly as he does in vs. 7 when he makes him watchman. As in that instance and as here that means the Lord directs his *davar* to him instead of him being a conduit for the same *davar*. In other words, it's personal. The prophet addresses Israel where he throws back Israel's words of guilt concerning previous transgressions and sins, the former being *peshah* (cf. 21.24). Their burden has been weighing everyone down making them waste away, *maqaq* (cf. 4.17) and crying out "How can we live?" At the Lord's bidding Ezekiel is to tell them there is hope by countering these desperate words with "as I live." So if the Lord lives, so can Israel live. This chapter deals with the Lord threatening Israel; no specifics are given because he wishes to stress individual responsibility as is the case with the watchman. Nevertheless, vss. 7 and 10 mention the "house of Israel," a corporate identity. It seems that the individual person and his place within the nation of Israel are almost interchangeable; i.e., there's little or no distinction between the two.

In vs. 11 for the second time the Lord has Ezekiel to say in a straightforward manner that he has no delight (*chaphets*, cf. 18.31) in the death of a wicked person but that he repent which is put in terms of the verb *shuv* (cf. 18.32) used twice, that is, to turn back. He concludes with an appeal asking why should Israel die when there's no reason for it. No response is given nor is any expected. The ball is now in Israel's court to respond.

Vs. 12 has the third and final rapid-fire "say" to Israel called here "my people," a direct and personal appeal to them. He contrasts righteousness and wickedness or *tsadyq* and *ryshhah* (cf. 23.43 and 18.27 respectively, though the latter isn't noted there). The latter seems to come off better than the former. That is to say, the righteousness of him who is righteous won't be able to save him whereas if the wicked falls yet returns from it, he won't fall. The next several verses (13 through 16) spell this out a bit further. What's even better is that no longer will sins be remembered provided the wicked person does what's lawful and right. All this shows the importance of memory in the collective sense relative to both the individual and collective group or nation of Israel.

In vs. 17 the Lord tells Ezekiel that Israel as one person is affronted by what the Lord had said about their collective transgression and sins (cf. vs. 10), claiming that his way (*derek*) isn't just, the verb being *tachan* which mirrors what the nation had said in 18.25. In fact, the other way around is the case. Then in the next verse the Lord says that the righteous person turning away falls into iniquity whereas the wicked one will live when he turns from his wickedness. Thus we have two directions, *tsdaqah* and *reshah* (cf. vs. 16 but not noted there and 31.11 respectively), each going in a direction opposite to them. The Lord brings this challenge, if you will, to a resolution by saying that because his way or *derek* isn't just, he will judge in accord with the *derek* of each person. However, nothing is said as to when and how. Simply saying it could be a threat of sorts to scare the people into the right way.

Vs. 21 shifts gears and gives a specific time, twelfth year->tenth month->fifth day of "our" exile. First person plural shows the solidarity Ezekiel has with his fellow Israelites languishing in Babylon with no apparent prospect of return, at least not yet. Then again, quite a few must have adapted which in many ways was better off, a far more sophisticated life style. Then throw in the Babylonian divinities, and you have an attractive environment. So when the man who escaped Jerusalem's fall and capture arrived—it must have taken him some time to make the treacherous journey—he came directly to Ezekiel telling him of the news. All the while he was formulating and reformulating words to present to him. Given the adaption of many Israelites to life in Babylon after over a decade, they didn't care but never would say this out loud. Best to keep quiet so they don't bring down further divine wrath upon them through the medium of Ezekiel. If they do this, chances are things will go on as they had been doing.

Ezekiel knew he was about to get some ominous news because in vs. 22 he said that the Lord's hand had been upon him (*'elay* or literally 'to me') before the man arrived from Jerusalem. He doesn't describe the nature of this hand but the preposition *'el-* more as "to" suggests the Lord was pushing him as opposed to weighing him down. Similarly the

Lord opened the prophet's mouth just as the man was arriving from Jerusalem. It had been closed as recorded in 3.26 in addition to him being bound with cords to prevent him from mingling with the people. However, there was plenty of prophesying between then and now. As a footnote to the **RSV** says, "Ezekiel's dumbness may refer to his apparent inability to speak of anything but the doom of Judah and Jerusalem for the following seven and one-half years.

Nevertheless, Ezekiel was able to be a conduit for the *davar* of the Lord between then and now as the previous chapters have revealed. However, now it was to be a different story. His mouth, if you will, ran the risk of getting in the way of this *davar* which he was fully conscious of. Awareness of this, however, put him on guard after all those *davar* so as not to interfere with them. So in the verse at hand, Ezekiel was well prepared to receive someone whom he intuitively felt must have a clue as to Jerusalem's fate else he wouldn't have prophesied against Israel as earlier in this chapter.

News about the fall of Jerusalem from the sole survivor is dropped rather abruptly in vs. 23 where the *davar* of the Lord "becomes" to Ezekiel in the now familiar fashion. What follows does concern the aftermath of Jerusalem's fall which of course, was very personal to Ezekiel compared with the other *davar*. The Lord now launches off into words about those who inhabit waste places or *charbah* (cf. 29.8) in Israel. Despite what had happened, they persist which is brought out by the words 'omrym le'mor which read literally as "saying to say." Their defense (as to be expected) is appeal to Israel's founding father, the First Patriarch, Abraham. Although he was one man, they claimed, we the present day Israelites are many and that the land in which they live (or had lived, taking into consideration Jerusalem's destruction) was given to them as a possession, *morashah* (cf. 25.8). True to a certain extent, but they failed to include the reason for this *morashah*, the Lord. A New Testament parallel is the proud yet defiant claim of those Jews arguing with Jesus, "Abraham is our father" [Jn 8.39].

Without realizing it, those who uttered these boastful words have opened themselves to an accusation by the Lord about all sorts of violations concerning their worship of the Lord, and that they will pay for them with their lives. Yet we have *yadah* (cf. 30.26) or knowing the Lord which comes to the rescue as it had time and time again. That is to say, in vs. 29 Israel has become a desolation and waste (*shemamah* and *mshamah*, cf. 6.14 for both) due to their abominations or *tohevah* (cf. 23.36). Yet from such an abysmal state there will arise *yadah*. If Israel only knew how privileged they were to have such divine concern in the midst of these abominable practices they would have turned from them long ago. In fact, the tragedy of Jerusalem's fall never would have happened. Yet Ezekiel knows that the *davar* he's uttering must be kept for posterity as a reminder for future generations. For that reason it wouldn't be surprising if throughout the entire process, from beginning to end, he had a scribe with him jotting everything down.

Vs. 30 doesn't start off good for Ezekiel or so it seems. It begins with the conjunctive *v-* translated as "as" and is the Lord speaking directly to him calling the Israelites "your

people” which to him could infer that he’s no better off than they. The people have become well acquainted with the *davar* of the Lord coming through Ezekiel, this having become a hot topic of conversation. Mention of this talk by the walls and doors of houses suggest it’s done in secret...gossip, if you...which they feared Ezekiel finding out. Finally they decide to band together and approach him, sitting before him as “my people” [vs. 31]. Despite their willingness to take the risk, Ezekiel can see right through them because they won’t do what he bids them to do. The lip service so clear to him is put in terms of gain or *betsah* (cf. 22.27) suggesting profit made by violence.

The Lord tells Ezekiel that to the Israelites he has become as the Hebrew text puts it in vs. 32, “a love song,” *hagavym* as found one other time, the previous verse as “love,” this word suggesting inordinate love. Such a siren song is amplified by Ezekiel’s beautiful voice and playing on an instrument. It appeals to their ears but not to their hearts.

Vs. 32 concludes this chapter with a warning that when what Ezekiel has uttered comes to pass, the Israelites will know that a prophet had been among them, *betok* (cf. 30.7). *Betok* means not just being with the people but in their very middle, something they knew but failed to act upon or better, failed to act upon the Lord’s *davar* mediated by him.

Son of man: 6

*Davar* of the Lord: 2

Thus says the Lord: 2

Know the Lord: 1

2) tsaphah, 3) zahar, 6) havon, 8) baqash, 9) natsal, nephesh, 10) peshah, maqaq, 11) chaphets, shuv, 12) tsadyq, ryshhah, 17) derek, tachan, 18) tsdaqah, reshah, 24) charbah, 28) shemamah, meshamah, tohevah, 29) yadah, 31) betsah, 32) hagavym, 33) betok

## Chapter Thirty-Four

1) The **word of the Lord** came to me: 2) "**Son of man**, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, **Thus says the Lord God**: Ho, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? 3) You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fatlings; but you do not feed the sheep. 4) The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the crippled you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought and with force and harshness you have ruled them. 5) So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the wild beasts. 6) My sheep were scattered, they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill; my sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth with none to search or seek for them. 7) "Therefore, you shepherds, hear the **word of the Lord**: 8) As I live, says the Lord God, because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts since there was no shepherd; and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, and have

not fed my sheep; 9) therefore, you shepherds, hear the **word of the Lord**: 10) **Thus says the Lord God**, Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep; no longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths that they may not be food for them. 11) "For **thus says the Lord God**: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will see them out 12) As a shepherd seeks out his flock when some of his sheep have been scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep; and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. 13) And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the fountains, and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14) I will feed them with good pasture and upon the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on fat pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. 15) I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. 16) I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the crippled, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will watch over; I will feed them in justice. 17) "As for you, my flock, **thus says the Lord God**: Behold, I judge between sheep and sheep, rams and he-goats. 18) Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water that you must foul the rest with your feet? 19) And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet and drink what you have fouled with your feet? 20) "Therefore, **thus says the Lord God** to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. 21) Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns till you have scattered them abroad, 22) I will save my flock, they shall no longer be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. 23) And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. 24) And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken. 25) "I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. 26) And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. 27) And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land; and they shall **know that I am the Lord** when I break the bars of their yoke and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them. 28) They shall no more be a prey to the nations nor shall the beasts of the land devour them; they shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid. 29) And I will provide for them prosperous plantations so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land and no longer suffer the reproach of the nations. 30) And they shall know that I, the Lord their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, says the Lord God. 31) And you are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, says the Lord God."

This new chapter opens predictably with the *davar* of the Lord “becoming” to Ezekiel along with the conjunctive *v-* which goes untranslated, again to show the close connection between what had just happened and the present prophesy against (*hal-*, literally ‘upon’) Israel’s shepherds or kings. So in one sentence we have four forms of speaking: *davar* of the Lord, prophesy, say and thus says. After these Ezekiel begins with the exclamation *hoy* or “ho” (i.e., woe) which, of course, doesn’t forebode well for the shepherds because he accuses them of feeding themselves, not the sheep in their charge. The verb *rahaḥ* is used twice, the participle form as “shepherd” found next in vs. 8. Actually it occurs many times throughout this chapter in different contexts. Not

only this, but the shepherds, supposedly being protectors, nevertheless eat the sheep and abuse them in every which-way they can devise. The words of vs. 4 “the lost you have not sought” are the exact opposite of those of Christ as Good Shepherd: “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” [Jn 10.11]. The same applies to the sheep scattered all over the place with the shepherds of Israel not caring about them.

In vs. 2 Ezekiel says to the shepherds “thus says the Lord” whereas vs. 7 begins with “hear the *davar* of the Lord.” The first is a round condemnation of their pastoral behavior and the second is a continuation extending through vs. 10. Then vs. 8 begins a long tirade with “because” and later in the same verse ending with “therefore” which begins vs. 9, part of an extended sentence. The same verse has a second “hear the *davar* of the Lord” followed in vs. 10 with “thus says the Lord.” All these proclamations about hearing means the shepherds haven’t paid attention at all to the Lord. However, they are forcefully yet gradually being compelled to open their ears.

Vs. 10 sums all this up with the Lord saying that he’s against the shepherds, the preposition ‘*el-*’ being used, literally as “to” which connotes opposing them directly. More dramatically and to the point, the Lord will rescue the sheep from their mouths, *natsal* (cf. 33.9) meaning more to snatch. As for these corrupt shepherds, we don’t hear a response. They are too ashamed to speak.

Vss. 11-16 begin with the third instance of “thus says the Lord,” the current words coming on the heels of the previous use in vs. 10. While the Lord still has the shepherds of Israel in mind, in a sense we could say that he has turned away from them. Now he decides to take matters into his own hand, words with which Jesus as well as his listeners must have been familiar. Because the passage (Jn 10.7-18) where Jesus calls himself Good Shepherd has direct bearing on this section, it’s inserted here:

*7) So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8) All who came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not heed them. 9) I am the door; if any one enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10) The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. 11) I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12) He who is a hireling and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13) He flees because he is a hireling and cares nothing for the sheep. 14) I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, 15) as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16) And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd. 17) For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. 18) No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this charge I have received from my Father."*

In vs. 11 the Lord says that he will both search and seek out his sheep, not those of the

shepherds though the flock is the same. The two verbs here are *darash* and *baqar*, the former also means to tread and the latter is an intense form of seeking as in plowing up the earth. In fact, the noun for oxen and cattle (same spelling) is derived from it, these cloven footed animals noted for digging...plowing...up the land in their search for food. “One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life” [Ps 27.4].

Vs. 12 has a second use of *baqar* with “when some of sheep” have been scattered, the words in parentheses literally as “when he is among (*betok*, cf. 33.33) his sheep.” Such sheep have been scattered, *parash* (cf. 17.20 but not noted there). They got lost on a day of clouds and thick darkness, “day” meaning more an occasion which can refer to the flock’s neglect by the shepherds. As for the latter, the noun is *haraphel* as in Ex 20.21: “And the people stood afar off while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.”

Vs. 13 speaks of sheep having been scattered among peoples and countries (*ham* and ‘*erets* cf. 11.17 and 22.29 respectively), most likely due to the neglect of their rulers. The Lord will gather them from these far-off places and return them to their own land or ‘*adamah* (cf. 25.3) where accent is upon the physical sense of place which gives the Israelites a greater sense of belonging. Once there, the Lord will feed them, *rahaq* being the word to pasture as in vs. 2 and will this more specifically in two places: 1) upon Israel’s mountains where are located fountains or ‘*aphyq* (cf. 32.6 but not noted there) and 2) in inhabited places, the two being extremes of isolation and habitation.

Vs. 14 continues with the theme of the Lord pasturing his people, words which later would be remembered in terms of Psalm Twenty-Three. Like the passage from John’s Gospel above, this psalm is given in full:

*1) The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; 2) he makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters; 3) he restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 4) Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. 5) You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows. 6) Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*

Vss. 14 and 15 stand out by reason of the verb *ravats* (cf. 19.1) used twice and also mirrored in vs. 2 of Psalm Twenty-Three above which is typical of quadrupeds which put their legs under their bodies when laying down. To do this means that the animal feels completely secure. Note that *ravats* in vs. 15 has a certain force, if you will, by reason of hiphil which means to cause...to cause to lay down. Due to the abuse suffered under shepherds or rulers, the Israelites-as-sheep were reluctant to do this and had, to some extent, be compelled to lay down. Furthermore, the Lord will seek the lost and care for the wounded while the fat and strong he will destroy as vs. 16 has it literally, *shamad* (cf. 14.9) being the verb which connotes laying waste. All this care for the sheep

is summed up by true meaning of *rahah*, that is, with regard to justice or *mishpat* (cf. 23.24).

Mention of the destruction of fat and strong sheep in the previous verse sets the tone for a change as brought on by both “as for you” and “thus says the Lord in vs. 17. The flock at hand comprises the entire nation of Israel, shepherds and sheep, they being divided into sheep, rams and he-goats, the latter two being representative of the leaders. There comes to mind the Great Judgement as depicted in Matthew Chapter Twenty-Five: “Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats” [vs. 32]. Such is the judgment foreshadowed in the section at hand where the Lord will judge (*shaphat*, cf. 30.19) between these. He addresses the rams and he-goats with a rhetorical question, as to why they didn’t share good pasture and water, following them with their feet. That means they haven’t learned to *ravats* as with the sheep noted in vs. 14.

Vs. 20 contains the last “Thus says the Lord” shortly after the one in vs. 17 which shows the importance of the situation at hand, that everyone present—sheep and shepherds—are paying full attention. Here a distinction is made between fat and lean sheep, not sheep in general with rams and he-goats as in vs. 17, this be stated again in vs. 22, sheep and sheep. The lean are pretty much secure in the knowledge that they are protected and don’t have to worry about any condemnation compared with the fat ones. That is to say, the former the Lord will save or *yashah* (the verbal root for the name Jesus). “[36.29]. Mention of David as one shepherd in vs. 23 makes the association between the situation at hand and Jesus as Good Shepherd all the more striking. While David will fulfil that role, the Lord says in vs. 24 that he will be “their God,” that is, over King David as prince among these sheep, if you will. *Betok* is used for “among” suggestive of being present in the center of the flock and not distant from them as noted in vs. 12.

Vss. 25-31 or through the end of this chapter deal more with the environment which the sheep enjoy. That is to say, it’s presumed that already they have been judged (cf. vs. 20) and have come off well, something they knew was a strong possibility. Now the Lord will make a covenant of peace (*shalom*, cf. 13.16) with them, the verb *karath* (cf. 21.3) indicative more as cutting and therefore done with greater care. This is followed by driving away wild beasts so that the Israelites may dwell securely in the forests, etc., such beasts being a way of speaking of the shepherds whom the Lord condemns so roundly. Similar mention is made in vs. 28 but with regard to nations. This is reminiscent of Rev 22.2: “Also on either side of the river the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit yielding its fruit each month.”

In vs. 27 the Lord will have the trees give their yield, this contributing to the people being secure, the noun *betach* (cf. 30.9 but not noted there) being used which means safety. As to be expected, this chapter closes with the promise of knowing (*yadah*, cf. 33.29) the Lord or more specifically, that he is the shepherd of his people.

Son of man: 1

*Davar* of the Lord: 3

Thus says the Lord: 5

Know the Lord: 1

2) rahah, 10) natsal, 11) darash, baqar, 12) betok, parash, haraphel, 13) rahah, ‘aphyq, 14) ravats, 16) shamad, mishpat, 17) shaphat, 22) yashah, 24) betok, 25) karath, shalom, 27) betach, 31) yadah

## Chapter Thirty-Five

1) The **word of the Lord** came to me: 2) "**Son of man**, set your face against Mount Seir and prophesy against it 3) and say to it, **Thus says the Lord God**: Behold, I am against you, Mount Seir, and I will stretch out my hand against you, and I will make you a desolation and a waste. 4) I will lay your cities waste, and you shall become a desolation; and you shall **know that I am the Lord**. 5) Because you cherished perpetual enmity and gave over the people of Israel to the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, at the time of their final punishment; 6) therefore, as I live, says the Lord God, I will prepare you for blood, and blood shall pursue you; because you are guilty of blood, therefore blood shall pursue you. 7) I will make Mount Seir a waste and a desolation; and I will cut off from it all who come and go. 8) And I will fill your mountains with the slain; on your hills and in your valleys and in all your ravines those slain with the sword shall fall. 9) I will make you a perpetual desolation, and your cities shall not be inhabited. Then you will **know that I am the Lord**. 10) "Because you said, ‘These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will take possession of them,’—although the Lord was there—11) therefore, as I live, says the Lord God, I will deal with you according to the anger and envy which you showed because of your hatred against them; and I will make myself known among you when I judge you. 12) And you shall know that I, the Lord, have heard all the revilings which you uttered against the mountains of Israel, saying, ‘They are laid desolate, they are given us to devour.’ 13) And you magnified yourselves against me with your mouth and multiplied your words against me; I heard it. 14) **Thus says the Lord God**: For the rejoicing of the whole earth I will make you desolate. 15) As you rejoiced over the inheritance of the house of Israel because it was desolate, so I will deal with you; you shall be desolate, Mount Seir, and all Edom, all of it. Then they will **know that I am the Lord**.

Another example of the now familiar *davar* of the Lord “becoming” to Ezekiel prefaced with the untranslated conjunctive *v-* as it opens an invective against Mount Seir, the southeastern border between Judah and Edom. Interestingly the Lord singles out this mountain...a visible place of reference...against (*hal-* or literally ‘upon’) which Ezekiel is to prophesy. That doesn’t mean he is to make his way down there but because of his office, can do it easily from Babylon or anywhere else on the planet if need be. For all intensive purposes Mount Seir is Edom though Edom itself is mentioned once in this chapter, the very last verse.

In vs. 3 the Lord begins with *hineh* (cf. 28.7) or “behold” to get everyone’s attention, especially the Edomites who hear this prophecy which hopefully will end with the familiar knowing or *yadah* the Lord as this chapter indeed does. If they could just bear the onslaught of calamities coming their way and wait for those almost magical words at the end which will put everything into perspective. While *yadah* is in the last verse, we

don't have to wait for it. Because Edom is a relative of Judah hearkening back to Jacob and Esau (cf. Gen 25.21-30) essentially both are brothers though later devolved into enemies. Perhaps due to this blood relationship which the Lord would like to restore we have four mentions of *yadah* in this short chapter before we come to the last one in vs. 15.

As for the invectives hurled at Mount Seir and hence Edom in this relatively short chapter, they can be listed as follows. Note the number of times (seven) *shemamah* or desolate occurs, a word which pretty much sums up the theme here:

Vs. 3: Desolation and waste or *shemamah* and *meshamah*, both as in 33.28.

Vs. 4: Desolation or *charbah* (cf. 33.27). This verse contains the first of four *yadah* with regard to the Lord.

Vs. 5: *Eyvah* or enmity (cf. 25.15 but not noted there) which is cherished, this word not in the Hebrew text. Mount Seir/Edom was in the habit of handing Israel over to the sword, the verb here being *nagar* which has the forceful meaning of pouring or gushing out. "And he will pour a draught from it, and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs" [Ps 75.8]. This dramatic outflow will take place at two times: that of calamity and final punishment or *'eyd* and *havon* (cf. 33.6). As for the former, cf. Ps 18.18: "They came upon me in the day of my calamity, but the Lord was my stay."

Vs. 6: Guilty of blood which reads literally as "you have hated blood" for which reason blood will pursue Mount Seir/Edom.

Vs. 7: Waste and desolation or *shemamah* used for both words (cf. vs. 3).

Vs. 8: Fill mountains and valleys with slain.

Vs. 9: A desolation or *shemamah* which is perpetual (cf. vs. 7). This verse contains the third reference to *yadah* (cf. vs. 4) of the Lord.

Vs. 10: Take possession of the two countries, that is, Edom conquering Israel.

Vs. 11: Anger and envy or *'aph* and *qin'ah* (cf. 22,20 and 23.25 respectively). The verse contains the third mention of *yadah* which reads literally as "in them" which is conditioned by the Lord judging "you" or Mount Seir/Edom the verb being *shaphat* (cf. 34.17)

Vs. 12: A mention of *yadah* with respect to the Lord hearing reviling by Mount Seir/Edom or *ne'atsoth* which has two other biblical references, Neh 9.18 and 26.

Vs. 13: Mount Seir/Edom both magnified herself and multiplied her words against the Lord who wasn't deaf to them but heard them, the verbs being *gadal* (cf. 24.9 but not noted there) and *hatar*. The latter has one other biblical reference: "But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" [Prov 24.6].

Vs. 14: Make desolate or the noun *shemamah* (cf. vs. 9).

Vs. 15: Make desolate or the noun *shemamah* (cf. vs. 14).

Son of man: 1

*Davar* of the Lord: 1

Thus says the Lord: 2

Know the Lord: 3

3) hineh, shemamah, meshamah, 4) charbah, yadah, 5) 'eyvah, eyd, havon, 7) shemamah, 9) shemamah, yadah 11) 'aph, qin'ah, yadah, shaphat, 12) yadah, ne'atsoth, 13) gadal, hatar, 14) shemamah, 15) shemamah

## Chapter Thirty-Six

1) "And you, **son of man**, prophesy to the mountains of Israel and say, O mountains of Israel, hear the **word of the Lord**. 2) **Thus says the Lord God**: Because the enemy said of you, 'Aha!' and, 'The ancient heights have become our possession,' 3) therefore prophesy and say, **Thus says the Lord God**: Because, yes, because they made you desolate and crushed you from all sides so that you became the possession of the rest of the nations, and you became the talk and evil gossip of the people; 4) therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the **word of the Lord God**: **Thus says the Lord God** to the mountains and the hills, the ravines and the valleys, the desolate wastes and the deserted cities which have become a prey and derision to the rest of the nations round about; 5) therefore **thus says the Lord God**: I speak in my hot jealousy against the rest of the nations and against all Edom who gave my land to themselves as a possession with wholehearted joy and utter contempt that they might possess it and plunder it. 6) Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel and say to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys, **Thus says the Lord God**: Behold, I speak in my jealous wrath, because you have suffered the reproach of the nations; 7) therefore **thus says the Lord God**: I swear that the nations that are round about you shall themselves suffer reproach. 8) "But you, O mountains of Israel, shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people Israel; for they will soon come home. 9) For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown; 10) and I will multiply men upon you, the whole house of Israel, all of it; the cities shall be inhabited and the waste places rebuilt; 11) and I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and be fruitful; and I will cause you to be inhabited as in your former times and will do more good to you than ever before. Then you will **know that I am the Lord**. 12) Yea, I will let men walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall possess you, and you shall be their inheritance, and you shall no longer bereave them of children. 13) **Thus says the Lord God**: Because men say to you, 'You devour men, and you bereave your nation of children,' 14) therefore you shall no longer devour men and no longer bereave your nation of children, says the Lord God; 15) and I will not let you hear any more the reproach of the nations, and you shall no longer bear the disgrace of the peoples and no longer cause your nation to stumble, says the Lord God." 16) The **word of the Lord** came to me: 17) "**Son of man**, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their doings; their conduct before me was like the uncleanness of a woman in her impurity. 18) So I poured out my wrath upon them for the blood which they had shed in the land, for the idols with which they had defiled it. 19) I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries; in accordance with their conduct and their deeds I judged them. 20) But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned my holy name, in that men said of them, 'These are the people of the Lord, and yet they had to go out of his land.' 21) But I had concern for my holy name which the house of Israel caused to be profaned among the nations to which they came. 22) "Therefore say to the house of Israel, **Thus says the Lord God**: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act but for the sake of my holy name which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. 23) And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name which has been profaned among the nations and which you have profaned among them; and the nations will **know that I am the Lord**, says the Lord God, when through

you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. 24) For I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. 25) I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26) A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27) And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. 28) You shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. 29) And I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses; and I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you. 30) I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations. 31) Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominable deeds. 32) It is not for your sake that I will act, says the Lord God; let that be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel. 33) **"Thus says the Lord God:** On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt. 34) And the land that was desolate shall be tilled instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by. 35) And they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are now inhabited and fortified.' 36) Then the nations that are left round about you shall know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt the ruined places and replanted that which was desolate; I, the Lord, have spoken, and I will do it. 37) **"Thus says the Lord God:** This also I will let the house of Israel ask me to do for them: to increase their men like a flock. 38) Like the flock for sacrifices like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they will know that I am the Lord."

The conjunctive *v-* which opens this chapter translates as “as for” signifying an immediate shift of attention by the Lord from the invectives against Edom to the mountains of Israel. Ezekiel could see this coming insofar as Mount Seir/Edom is a close relative to Israel as pointed out in the last chapter in the relationship between Esau and Jacob. Then there’s added the further connection of mountains which here are in the plural, signifying all Israel, compared with the singular mount of Seir in 35.1. By this time Ezekiel, of course, was well familiar with how the Lord had condemned Israel roundly for various forms of idolatry and braced himself for a continuation of them. However, in the back of his mind he realized that the Lord just might be changing his tune, especially because of *yadah* mentioned with regard to Edom as discussed just above.

In vs. 2 the Lord speaks of an unnamed enemy which has claimed the ancient heights or mountains as their possession, *morashah* (cf. 25.8) which derives from the verbal root *yarash*, to possess as well as to inherit. This discloses the enemy as most likely Edom...Esau’s descendants...which wanted to usurp the descendants of Jacob, Israel. And so the Lord has his prophet utter a prophesy in vs. 3 which turns out to be an extended sentence running through vs. 6.

Already the enemy had made Israel both desolate and crushed her, *shamah* (cf. 23.31) and *sha’aph*, the latter also meaning to pant, to strive. “With open mouth I pant because I long for your commandments” [Ps 119.131]. While this assault may have been done by

Edom alone, it resulted in Israel becoming not just the *morashah* of that country but of all nations. Not only this but something worse befell Israel. She became the subject of evil gossip which is rendered literally as “being taken up (*halah*, cf. 23.46) on the lips of the tongue.” The Lord continues with a reminder to his people with something all too familiar, namely, that Israel had become (among other things) both a prey and derision to other nations, *baz* and *lahag* (cf. 23.32 but not noted there). The former (cf. 26.5) also means spoil or plunder whereas the latter connotes stammering, as though people doing this derision can’t get it out of their mouths as quickly as they wish.

Vs. 5 begins with the all-important *laken* or “therefore” which signifies a change for the better for Israel, this coupled with “thus says the Lord.” At first those hearing it may be bracing themselves for a further assault, but it turns out very differently. The Lord *davar* in his hot jealousy, literally, “fire of jealousy” (*qin’ah*, cf. 35.11) directed both against (*hal-*, on) nations and Edom. They have presumed to take Israel as their *morashah* (cf. vs. 3)...not just that but to do so with wholehearted joy which reads literally as “in joy of all heart,” the two nouns being *simchah* (cf. 35.15 but not noted there) and *lev* (cf. 28.2).

Vs. 6 begins with another *laken* or “therefore,” the very hearing of which thrilled Israel. Ezekiel is to prophesy not just about Israel but its land (*‘adamah*, cf. 25.3), an important word in this context since it signifies the physical spot which others had captured and ravished. It leads to another *davar* by the Lord marked by jealous wrath or the two nouns, *qin’ah* and *chemah* (cf. vs. 5 and 25.12 respectively) because Israel had endured reproach by nations, *klimah* (cf. 16.63).

Vs. 7 has yet another *laken* or “therefore,” the third one in rapid succession where the Lord swears which literally runs as “I lift my hand” with regard to nations around Israel. They will suffer reproach or *klimah*, the same *klimah* which they have inflicted upon Israel.

Once again in vs. 8 the Lord addresses the mountains of Israel where the conjunctive *v-* translates as “but.” They will serve to give produce to nourish the people in preparation for Israel’s return home which is rendered literally as “they draw near (*qarav*, cf. 22.4) to come.” Such *qarav* pertains to the exiles living in Babylon plus others who may be scattered elsewhere. The Lord puts his presence in three ways as found in vs. 9: for (*‘el-* or to), turn (*panah*, cf. 8.3) as well as be tilled and sown, the last two indicating that Israel will be rooted in her native soil. Once established, the Lord will multiply the people which suffered diminishment before being exiled and be inhabited as before this exile. To top it off, the Lord says that he will do more good than before but with the intent of knowing (*yadah*) that he is doing all this.

Vs. 12 is a reminder that the Lord is speaking of the mountains of Israel when he will allow people, along with Israel, to “walk upon you.” Reference perhaps is to former shrines to idols on the height, walking a symbol of trampling upon these former places of worship. Within these shrines human sacrifice had been offered, especially children,

which had caused bereavement, now abolished, the verb being *kashal* which fundamentally means to fall and found in the next two verses, 14 and 15.

Vs. 16 simply has the *davar* of the Lord “becoming” a second time to Ezekiel, prefaced with the conjunctive *v-*. Since this *davar* had come to him at the beginning of the chapter, we could say that between then and vs. 15 he had experienced a *selah* or pause of unspecified duration as noted with regard to 32.17. Vs. 16 stands alone, indicative that the *davar* about to be expressed is of special importance.

The *davar* starting from vs. 17 through vs. 21 shows the Lord recapping Israel’s inglorious history of having defiled their own land or ‘*adamah*’ (cf. vs. 6), the verb being ‘*tame’*’ (cf. 23.38). The source of this defilement, of course, is Israel’s adherence to idols, *gilulym* (cf. 30.13) which are associated directly with ‘*adamah*. Because of this the Lord had no other choice except to scatter and disperse Israel, *puts* and *zarah* being found together as in 22.15. Such is his judgment (*shaphat*) which is in accord with Israel’s conduct and deeds, their *davar* and *halylah* (cf. 14.23), the latter often associated with abominable practices.

Despite this, Israel proved to be remarkable immune to repentance, for when they arrived at the nations (chief of which was Babylon though not mentioned), they picked up their practices as if nothing had happened. Vs. 20 Israel begins with the conjunctive *v-* as “but” to show the unrelenting attitude of this people which makes you wonder how and why an entire nation could be so blind and stubborn. Unsaid, of course, is the powerful hold of idol worship which is condemned roundly but never really spelled out as to why they had done it. This verse simply doesn’t say that the Israelites practiced idolatry in places where they’ve been scattered but adds for emphasis “wherever they came,” these words signaling a kind of disgust. Even those to whom they came said that despite belonging to the Lord, they had to leave their own land. No need to expand on this further.

After coming close to giving up, the Lord just can’t seem to leave Israel to her own devices. Just as vs. 20 began with the conjunctive *v-* as “but,” such is the case with vs. 21. The Lord finds a way to get out of this desperate situation, that is, he states concern not for Israel but for his holy name, the verb being *chamal* (cf. 16.4) which connotes compassion. After all, Israel was responsible (and still is) for having profaned it, *chalal* (cf. 28.16). As for those nations among which Israel had been dispersed, nothing is said of how their worship of idols had been received among them. The only hint we have is in vs. 20 as noted when people remarked at the reason why the Israelites were banished. This fact alone seems reason enough for everyone to be suspicious of them and keep them at a respectable distance.

Vs. 22 contains instructions from the Lord to Ezekiel as to the reason for what he’s about to do, namely, to act because of his name having been profaned. He will vindicate the holiness not just of his name but of his “great name,” the verb being *qadash* (cf. 28.25) which means to set aside and is the verbal root for “holy.” The result? Not just

Israel but all nations are to know or *yadah* (cf. vs. 11) that it is the Lord who is doing this. While the Lord is speaking, he realizes full well from earlier experiences that this won't work. He has in mind turning the hearts and minds of a few people who will remain faithful to him and carry on memory of him within the largely corrupt body of Israel. That's the most he can hope for.

In vss. 24 through 30 the Lord outlines what he will do for Israel, again, this for the same of his holy name. Because they form a plan, these seven verses may be outline as follows:

Vs. 24: Earlier verses spoke of how the Lord was scattering Israel among the names, however, in vs. 24 he decides to reverse this and return Israel to her own land or '*adamah* (cf. vs. 17).

Vs. 25: Sprinkle clean water upon Israel, the verb being *zaraq* (cf. 10.22) and reminiscent of Num 19.18: "Then a clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water and sprinkle it upon the tent (etc.)." The goal, of course, is to cleanse Israel from her idols and the uncleanness resulting from them, *tum'ah* (cf. 22.15).

Vs. 26: New heart and new spirit, *lev* and *ruach* (cf. vss. 11 and 20.41 respectively). Note that the Lord gives Israel the former and puts within (*qerev*, cf. 22.27) Israel the latter. As for *lev*, the Lord will remove the one of stone and give one of flesh, again, no mention of *qerev* as with *ruach*.

Vs. 27: The Lord will put his *ruach* within (*qerev*) Israel, this *ruach* seemingly different from the new one of vs. 26. Thus Israel will end up with two spirits. This will cause Israel to walk and cause her to observe (*shamar* cf. 20.19) in the Lord's statutes and ordinances, *choq* and *mishpat* respectively (cf. 20.25 and 34.16), the new *lev* and two types of *ruach* now being endowed with the power to guide Israel.

Vs. 28: Israel will dwell in the land ('*erets*, cf. 22.29) of their fathers where the Lord will be their God.

Vs. 29: The Lord will deliver Israel from all her uncleanness, the verb *yashah* (root for the proper name Jesus) and the noun *tuma'ah* (cf. 34.22 and vs. 25 respectively). Also, Israel will no longer suffer any famine which harkens back to when Joseph summoned his family to Egypt in order to escape famine in the land.

Vs. 30: Fruit of the land will abound which will prevent famine which here is presented as a disgrace or *cherpah* (cf. 22.4) which also means reproach.

Vs. 31 brings these seven divine interventions to a close and has the conjunctive *v-* as "then." They are designed for Israel to remember (*zakar*, cf. 21.32) her evil ways and so forth. In the next verse the Lord is quick to add that he will do the seven above mentioned benefits not for Israel's sake which he emphasizes with "let that be known (*yadah*, cf. vs. 23) to you." He then adds a cry for Israel to be ashamed and confounded for her former ways, the two verbs being *bosh* and *kalam* (cf. 16.63 and 16.61 respectively).

Vs. 33 begins with "thus says the Lord" with regard to a day which refers to the seven things he will do all at once which is bound up with cleansing Israel, *tahar* (cf. 24.13), a precondition for re-inhabitation of a land previously made a desolation or *shemamah*

(cf. 35.15). This ruin is made all the more tragic by mention of people passing by, that is, going from one place to another possibly with the intent of stopping. However, the *shemamah* now resembles the garden of Eden which makes it a highly attractive stopping place.

Vs. 36 says that all nations will recognize this miraculous transformation from *shemamah* into Eden as effected by the Lord. Although it's presented as done, the verse says "I will do it" perhaps a way of the Lord saying that he won't let Israel revert to *shemamah*.

The last few verses of this chapter deal with the Lord increasing Israel's population as a flock which resembles literally a "flock of holy things" in vs. 38. Such flocks are intended for sacrifice at the temple in Jerusalem during appointed feasts or *mohed* which also means an assembly or special time, perhaps not unlike the idea of a *kairos* event. "They shall keep my laws and my statutes in all my appointed feasts" [44.24]. Finally we have *yadah* or knowing the Lord which, despite the proclivity of Israel to idolatry, is the goal and ray of hope offered.

Son of man: 2

*Davar* of the Lord: 3

Thus says the Lord: 10

Know the Lord: 2

2) morashah, 3) shamah, sha'aph, morashah, halah, 4) baz, lahag, 5) qin'ah, morashah, simchah, lev, 6) 'adamah, qin'ah, chemah, klimah, 7) klimah, 8) qarav, 9) panah, 11) yadah, 13) kashal, 17) 'adamah, tame', 18) gilulym, 19) puts, zarah, shaphat, halylah, 21) chamal, chalal, 22) qadash, 23) yadah, 24) 'adamah, 25) zaraq, tuma'ah, 26) lev, ruach, qerev, 27) ruach, qerev, shamar, choq, mishpat, 28) 'erets, 29) yashah, tuma'ah, 30) cherpah, 31) zakar, 32) yadah, bosh, kalam, 33) tahar, 34) shemamah, 38) mohed, yadah

## Chapter Thirty-Seven

1) The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the midst of the valley; it was full of bones. 2) And he led me round among them; and behold, there were very many upon the valley; and lo, they were very dry. 3) And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord God, you know." 4) Again he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. 5) Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. 6) And I will lay sinews upon you and will cause flesh to come upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord." 7) So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied there was a noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. 8) And as I looked, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. 9) Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these

slain that they may live." 10) So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great host. 11) Then he said to me, "**Son of man**, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off.' 12) Therefore prophesy, and say to them, **Thus says the Lord God**: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you home into the land of Israel. 13) And you shall **know that I am the Lord** when I open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. 14) And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken, and I have done it, says the Lord." 15) The **word of the Lord** came to me: 16) "**Son of man**, take a stick and write on it, 'For Judah and the children of Israel associated with him'; then take another stick and write upon it, 'For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim) and all the house of Israel associated with him'; 17) and join them together into one stick that they may become one in your hand. 18) And when your people say to you, 'Will you not show us what you mean by these?' 19) say to them, **Thus says the Lord God**: Behold, I am about to take the stick of Joseph (which is in the hand of Ephraim) and the tribes of Israel associated with him; and I will join with it the stick of Judah and make them one stick that they may be one in my hand. 20) When the sticks on which you write are in your hand before their eyes, 21) then say to them, **Thus says the Lord God**: Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone and will gather them from all sides, and bring them to their own land; 22) and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; and they shall be no longer two nations and no longer divided into two kingdoms. 23) They shall not defile themselves any more with their idols and their detestable things or with any of their transgressions; but I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. 24) "My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes. 25) They shall dwell in the land where your fathers dwelt that I gave to my servant Jacob; they and their children and their children's children shall dwell there for ever; and David my servant shall be their prince forever. 26) I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will bless them and multiply them and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. 27) My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 28) Then the nations will know that I the Lord sanctify Israel when my sanctuary is in the midst of them for evermore."

This chapter doesn't begin with the expected conjunctive *v-*, indicative of a *selah...* pause...between prophecies. The time gap is irrelevant, whether long or shot. However the Lord's hand being upon Ezekiel is significant as in the previous instances mentioned thus far because it represents something very important about to be communicated. Earlier references to this divine hand are: 1.3, 3.22, 8.1 and 33.22. The image is of a gigantic hand coming from the sky and plucking the prophet though vs. 1 says that it was done by the Spirit of the Lord, *Ruach* as in 11.5. Ezekiel is in Babylon and is transported to a valley, the place being unidentified though the Hebrew text has *biquhah* which is a wide U-shaped valley (cf. 3.23). Actually Ezekiel is put in the center of this U-shaped depression or *qerev* (cf. 36.27) with human bones scattered all around. Evidently there had been a battle which goes unspecified. Perhaps they had taken up a defensive position within this place, figuring that the U-shape would be to their advantage. So when the Lord leads him around (*savyv*, cf. 23.22) this valley, the prophet is starting at one end of the U and going around to the other side. All the while the Lord

isn't saying anything. The sight is enough for Ezekiel.

Having completed their tour, the Lord puts forth a kind of rhetorical question, that is, whether or not the bones can live to which Ezekiel responds deftly, “you know” (*yadah*, cf. 36.38). Without missing a beat, the Lord asks him to prophesy over the bones with “hear the *davar* of the Lord.” Despite the extreme dryness, the bones retained the ability to listen and respond to this *davar* which holds out some hope. Vs. 4 emphasizes this with *hineh* or behold as a prelude to bringing *ruach* (cf. vs. 1) into the bones to restore them to life.

Vs. 6 describes how the Lord reverses the dying process, if you will, by the bones being reassembled into bodies which still aren't alive. Again, we have mention of *ruach* as promised in the previous verse followed by the familiar *yadah* (cf. vs. 2) or knowing the Lord. The next few verses or through vs. 8 we have a somewhat humorous reassembly of the bones, each one to each individual followed by bodies growing on them. All this is accompanied by a rattling sound or *rahash* (cf. 12.18) which means a quaking as in an earthquake. Despite this dramatic occurrence, still the reassembled bodies lacked that all-important *ruach*. Without it the bodies simply would revert to dry bones. This compelled the Lord to have Ezekiel prophesy again which he does “to the *ruach*” (vs. 9) which seems different from the *Ruach* of vs. 1, referring to a life-giving divine presence within the world represented by the four winds, again, *ruach*. They are to breathe or *naphach* (cf. 22.20 but note noted there) upon (*b-*, literally as ‘in’) the slain and bring them back to life. Note the difference between *ruach* and *naphach*, the latter more a blowing which here is done from the four cardinal directions of north, south, east and west. No matter which way these four winds blew in the U-shaped valley, the walls would distribute their force evenly throughout. Once this had been completed, the bodies became an exceedingly great host, *me'od* (cf. 16.13) used twice and literally as “exceedingly exceedingly.”

In vs. 11 the Lord reveals to Ezekiel that the dead bones which now have come to life are not an army as he had presumed but the entire house of Israel. They cried out as one voice that they've come to such a miserable fate, cut off completely (*gazar*), echoing the sentiments of Ps 88.5: “like those whom you remember no more, for they are cut off from your hand.”

In vs. 12 the Lord uses this image of dry bones come to life as a promise to open Israel's graves and return them home to the land (*'adamah*, cf. 36.24) of Israel. Just as when the bones were about to be endowed with life, here Israel as a nation is reminded that once home in Israel, they will know or *yadah* (cf. vs. 6) that it is the Lord who accomplished all this. Despite such a wonder, another step remains to be accomplished, that is, for the Lord to put (*natan*, literally ‘to give’; cf. 22.31) his *Ruach* in the people of Israel, this *Ruach* being the same as in vs. 1. *Natan* is used a second time here in vs. 14 with regard to “your own *'adamah*.” Yet once more this is for knowing or *yadah* the Lord.

Vs. 15 begins with the third and final *davar* of the Lord “becoming” to Ezekiel prefaced

with the conjunctive *v-* signifying a shift in imagery from the dry bones to the oracle of two sticks, *hets* (cf. 15.1) the common noun for tree. The size of this *hets* isn't specified though seems to be about the size of a walking-stick. One represents Judah and the children of Israel associated with it, *chavar* (cf. 1.9) meaning to bind or to connect. The other represents Ephraim and belonging to Joseph along with those of the house of Israel associated with it. Not that the former has "children of Israel" whereas the latter, "house of Israel." Ezekiel is to hold the two in one hand which doesn't necessarily mean tying or fusing them together.

In vs. 18 the people to whom Ezekiel is speaking wants him to show what he means by this, *nagad* meaning more to speak or to recount. He then proceeds to say how both will be as one in his hand, again, not specifying whether or not they will become fused or the like. In vs. 20 the prophet apparent has given the two sticks to the people on which to write but doesn't say what they inscribe on them. The names of each of the twelve tribes is the best bet, hoping that they will be reunited as one nation. Next the Lord speaks of how he will take the tribes and unite them on their own land, '*erets* (cf. 36.28) being used instead of '*adamah*, this word intimating the formation or re-formation of Israel.

Once established in this '*erets* or better, having become '*erets* itself, the Lord will establish a king over them. Furthermore, they won't defile themselves (*tame'*, cf. 36.17) with idols, detestable things and transgressions or *gilulym*, *shiquts* and *pehsah*, 36.18, 20.7 and 33.10 respectively. Most importantly, the Lord will save them from backsliding, *yashah* (cf. 36.29) and *moshev*, the latter more as a dwelling. As we've seen thus far in the Book of Ezekiel, this has been a perennial problem, and to achieve it would be the greatest of all miracles. Finally vs. 23 says that Israel will be his people and he will be their God, literally "to (*l-*) people" and "to (*l-*) God."

As for the king promised in vs. 22, the Lord says in vs. 24 that David will fulfill that role; rather, "David" signifying someone in his line and worthy of being not just a successor but even better. In this verse this quasi-specified person is identified with the patriarch Jacob ('my servant') which roots him in legitimacy. The Lord is quick to emphasize again the importance of the land or '*erets* in vs. 25 with this new David reigning over them forever. That implies, of course, someone greater than a man, God himself. Also mention of the Lord's sanctuary and dwelling place or *miqdash* and *mishkan* (cf. 25.3 and 25.4, the latter not noted there) shows this. Note that the former is *betok* (cf. 34.24) and the latter is literally "to (*l-*) them." Stating as in vs. 23 that the Lord will be their God, literally "to (*l-*) people" and "to (*l-*) God" puts a seal of confirmation on this sanctuary and dwelling place, if you will.

Chapter Thirty-Seven concludes with familiar nations recognizing (*yadah*, cf. vs. 14) the Lord, here with the difference that he is sanctifying Israel, *qadash* being the verb as to set apart (cf. 36.22). However, this will take place once the Lord's sanctuary or *miqdash* is *betok* (cf. vs. 26 for both) or in the very center of Israel, *miqdash* being derived from *qadash*. Usually nations would attack Israel from without, pressing inward. While they may attempt this, they will fail because of the Lord being *betok* and able to push

outward.

Son of man: 4

*Davar* of the Lord: 3

Thus says the Lord: 5

Know the Lord: 2

1) ruach, biqhah, qerev, 2) savyv, yadah, 5) hineh, ruach, 6) ruach, yadah, 7) rahash, 8) ruach, 9) ruach, naphach, 10) me'od, 11) gazar, 12) 'adamah, 13) yadah, 14) natan, ruach, 'adamah, yadah, 16) hets, chavar, 18) nagad, 22) 'erets, 23) tame', gilulym, shiquts, peshah, yashah, moshev, 25) 'erets, 26) miqdash, betok, 27) mishkan, 28) yadah, qadash, miqdash, betok

## Chapter Thirty-Eight

1) The **word of the Lord** came to me: 2) "**Son of man**, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him 3) and say, **Thus says the Lord God**: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal; 4) and I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you forth and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in full armor, a great company, all of them with buckler and shield, wielding swords; 5) Persia, Cush and Put are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; 6) Gomer and all his hordes; Beth-togarmah from the uttermost parts of the north with all his hordes—many peoples are with you. 7) "Be ready and keep ready, you and all the hosts that are assembled about you, and be a guard for them. 8) After many days you will be mustered; in the latter years you will go against the land that is restored from war, the land where people were gathered from many nations upon the mountains of Israel which had been a continual waste; its people were brought out from the nations and now dwell securely, all of them. 9) You will advance, coming on like a storm, you will be like a cloud covering the land you and all your hordes and many peoples with you. 10) "**Thus says the Lord God**: On that day thoughts will come into your mind, and you will devise an evil scheme 11) and say, 'I will go up against the land of unwalled villages; I will fall upon the quiet people who dwell securely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having no bars or gates'; 12) to seize spoil and carry off plunder; to assail the waste places which are now inhabited and the people who were gathered from the nations who have gotten cattle and goods, who dwell at the center of the earth. 13) Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish and all its villages will say to you, 'Have you come to seize spoil? Have you assembled your hosts to carry off plunder, to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to seize great spoil?' 14) "**Therefore, son of man**, prophesy, and say to Gog, **Thus says the Lord God**: On that day when my people Israel are dwelling securely, you will bestir yourself 15) and come from your place out of the uttermost parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great host, a mighty army; 16) you will come up against my people Israel like a cloud covering the land. In the latter days I will bring you against my land that the nations may know me when through you, O Gog, I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. 17) "**Thus says the Lord God**: Are you he of whom I spoke in former days by my servants the prophets of Israel who in those days prophesied for years that I would bring you against them? 18) But on that day, when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, says the Lord God, my wrath will be roused. 19) For in my jealousy and in my blazing wrath I declare, On that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; 20) the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and the beasts of the field and all

creeping things that creep on the ground and all the men that are upon the face of the earth shall quake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground. 21) I will summon every kind of terror against Gog, says the Lord God; every man's sword will be against his brother. 22) With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him; and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples that are with him, torrential rains and hailstones, fire and brimstone. 23) So I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they will **know that I am the Lord**.

At this juncture or heading toward the end of the book we've become familiar with the *davar* of the Lord "becoming" to Ezekiel, this opening verse prefaced with the untranslated conjunctive *v-*. However, Chapter Thirty-Eight contains the last such instance, it being enshrined, if you will, in a single verse almost as though to issue a farewell.

Starting here and continuing through vs. 20 of the next chapter we encounter another final, this one being an oracle which is, against Gog from Magog coming from the north. Even the names have a barbaric if not diabolical ring to them. Gog seems to be a king with Magog his kingdom. Once such reference intimating this is Jer 6.22: "Behold, a people is coming from the north country, a great nation is stirring from the farthest parts of the earth." Also a number of unfamiliar places and peoples are mentioned which can make a rough going from the vantage point of *lectio divina*, the purpose of this document. However, they can be lumped together as threats to the spiritual life but are overcome under the protection of Ezekiel as recipient of the divine *davar*.

In vs. 2 the Lord bids Ezekiel to set his face in the direction of Gog of Magog, including their respective princes, the verb *sum* (cf. 29.1) intimating that he is to keep his face turned as well as fixed there indefinitely. Once in position, he is to prophesy against (*hal-*, literally 'upon') him, that is, Gog. In vs. 3 the Lord says that he is against Gog, the preposition '*el-* or "to;" compare with *hal-* just mentioned. In vs. 4 the Lord states that he is about to use hooks to drag Gog along with Persia, Cush and Put plus a few other enemies from the far north.

In vs. 8 the Lord seems to be encouraging Gog to attack southward but only after a period of "many days" when that nation and its allies will be mustered, *paqad* (cf. 23.21). This indefinite time period is followed by another longer one called "latter years" when the alliance against Israel will go against the land, '*erets* (cf. 37.25), the preposition '*el-* or literally "to." The land is described as having been restored from war, *cherev* literally meaning sword. Also it had been a continual waste or *charbah* (cf. 35.4) which is from the same verbal root as *cherev*. It's at peace which is put in terms as dwelling securely or *betach* (cf. 34.27), that is, trust. So it seems that the two periods of many days and latter years were working in favor of Gog as a preparation to make an attack upon Israel. Emphasis upon this long build-up simply adds to the swift and dramatic action taken by the Lord about to be described.

Vs. 10 has the second "thus says the Lord," that is, addressed to Gog and peoples in

league with that people with regard to their machinations “on that day” or when they decided to attack Israel. Thoughts or *davar* will go up (*halah*, cf. 36.3) on their hearts, the preposition *hal-* prefaced to *lev* (cf. 26.36), the idea being that such *davar* assumed a life of their own and assaulted them from which there is no turning back. They form an evil scheme, the verb *chashav* (cf. 11.2) with the noun derived from it, *machasheveth*. “The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nought; he frustrates the plans of the peoples” [Ps 33.10]. The form this takes is to assault unwalled or unprotected villages with the intent of subduing them before isolating fortified places which will make it easier to conquer these places. If that weren’t enough, Gog plans to attack Sheba and Dedan which is further south. Incredible as it sounds, faraway Tarshish, traditionally a reference to Spain, is included.

Vs. 14 has the Lord prophesying through Ezekiel yet again to Gog. The words “you will bestir yourself” read in Hebrew literally “will you not know” (*yadah*, cf. 37.28). Now Gog sets in motion a plan of attack with “many peoples” when as vs. 16 puts it, he will go against “my land” (*erets*, cf. vs. 8), the land of the Lord himself. Use of the first person “my” thus makes the attack personal. As has been the case with so many previous instances, the purpose of this attack is that nations may know the Lord, *yadah* (cf. vs. 14). Such intimate knowledge of the Lord by those who don’t know him yet will come to fruition when he vindicates his holiness before them. The verb *qadash* (cf. 37.28) is used here which fundamentally means to set apart for a specific purpose.

In vs. 17 the Lord puts a rhetorical question to Gog and those allied with him which can’t be answered. It’s based upon prophecies from earlier in Israel’s history which have direct bearing upon Gog, that he will end up just like those enemies of Israel who have been eliminated. This question sets the stage for the Lord to take action put literally as “my fury shall ascend in anger,” the two nouns being *chemah* and *‘aph* (cf. 36.6 and 35.11 respectively). They are intensified in the next verse (19) being put as jealousy and blazing wrath, *qin’ah* and *hevrah* (36.6 and 17.19 respectively). This verse contains the fourth mention of “that day” in Chapter Thirty-Eight meaning that the invasion from the north by Gog is a serious threat, even more so than by the Babylonians. Apparently the former won’t spare anyone whereas the latter was keen on taking select captives to serve in their capitol and elsewhere.

Also on this the fourth and last day the land of Israel itself will shake...perhaps not out of fear but of arousal because as vs. 16 has it, Gog will be invading “my land” or the Lord’s. This shaking will extend to all living things in preparation for the Lord to throw, as vs. 21 puts it literally, “a sword to all my mountains” or those places on which Gog and his allies have taken position. The remaining verses of this chapter go into vivid detail as to how the Lord will destroy Gog ending with the expected that “they will know (*yadah*, cf. vs. 16) that I am the Lord.”

Son of man: 2

*Davar* of the Lord: 1

Thus says the Lord: 4

Know the Lord: 1

2) sum, 8) paqad, 'erets, charbah, betach, 10) halah, lev, chashav, machasheveth, 14) yadah, 16) 'erets, yadah, qadash, 18) chemah, 'aph, 19) qin'ah, hevrah, 23) yadah

## Chapter Thirty-Nine

1) "And you, **son of man**, prophesy against Gog and say, **Thus says the Lord God**: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal; 2) and I will turn you about and drive you forward and bring you up from the uttermost parts of the north and lead you against the mountains of Israel; 3) then I will strike your bow from your left hand and will make your arrows drop out of your right hand. 4) You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your hordes and the peoples that are with you; I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the wild beasts to be devoured. 5) You shall fall in the open field; for I have spoken, says the Lord God. 6) I will send fire on Magog and on those who dwell securely in the coastlands; and they shall **know that I am the Lord**. 7) "And my holy name I will make known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let my holy name be profaned any more; and the nations shall **know that I am the Lord**, the Holy One in Israel. 8) Behold, it is coming and it will be brought about, says the Lord God. That is the day of which I have spoken. 9) "Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go forth and make fires of the weapons and burn them, shields and bucklers, bows and arrows, hand pikes and spears, and they will make fires of them for seven years; 10) so that they will not need to take wood out of the field or cut down any out of the forests, for they will make their fires of the weapons; they will despoil those who despoiled them and plunder those who plundered them, says the Lord God. 11) "On that day I will give to Gog a place for burial in Israel, the Valley of the Travelers east of the sea; it will block the travelers, for there Gog and all his multitude will be buried; it will be called the Valley of Hamon-gog. 12) For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them in order to cleanse the land. 13) All the people of the land will bury them; and it will redound to their honor on the day that I show my glory, says the Lord God. 14) They will set apart men to pass through the land continually and bury those remaining upon the face of the land so as to cleanse it; at the end of seven months they will make their search. 15) And when these pass through the land and any one sees a man's bone, then he shall set up a sign by it until the buriers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon-gog. 16) (A city Hamonah is there also.) Thus shall they cleanse the land. 17) "As for you, **son of man**, **thus says the Lord God**: Speak to the birds of every sort and to all beasts of the field, 'Assemble and come, gather from all sides to the sacrificial feast which I am preparing for you, a great sacrificial feast upon the mountains of Israel, and you shall eat flesh and drink blood. 18) You shall eat the flesh of the mighty and drink the blood of the princes of the earth—of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan. 19) And you shall eat fat till you are filled and drink blood till you are drunk at the sacrificial feast which I am preparing for you. 20) And you shall be filled at my table with horses and riders, with mighty men and all kinds of warriors,' says the Lord God. 21) "And I will set my glory among the nations; and all the nations shall see my judgment which I have executed, and my hand which I have laid on them. 22) The house of Israel shall **know that I am the Lord** their God from that day forward. 23) And the nations shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity because they dealt so treacherously with me that I hid my face from them and gave them into the hand of their adversaries, and they all fell by the sword. 24) I dealt with them according to their uncleanness and their transgressions and hid my face from

them. 25) "Therefore **thus says the Lord God**: Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for my holy name. 26) They shall forget their shame and all the treachery they have practiced against me when they dwell securely in their land with none to make them afraid 27) when I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them from their enemies' lands and through them have vindicated my holiness in the sight of many nations. 28) Then they shall **know that I am the Lord their God** because I sent them into exile among the nations and then gathered them into their own land. I will leave none of them remaining among the nations any more; 29) and I will not hide my face any more from them when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, says the Lord God."

The expected conjunctive *v-* shows the close connection between two chapters dealing with the same topic, Gog's intent to invade Israel with its unholy alliance. Note the two uses of prepositions with regard to Ezekiel's prophesying, that is, "against you:" the first has *hal-* or "upon" and the second has *'el-* or "to." In other words, Gog is getting a double dose of prophesy.

A footnote in the NIV puts it well: "The same basic events as those of ch. 38 are described though some new details are added." This observation precludes the task of giving notations though some points will be brought out here, albeit brief.

Vs. 6 has the first of four uses of *yadah* with regard to the Lord which happens after he has brought revenge either upon Israel or her enemies. Fortunately for all involved, this *yadah* can be counted upon and holds out hope despite any dismal situation involved. The other examples in this chapter are 7, 22 and 28.

Right after the *yadah* pertaining to Gog we have one with regard to Israel in vs. 7 as it pertains to the Lord's holy (*qodesh*, cf. 22.26) name which has taken up residence, if you will, in her very center or *betok* (cf. 37.28). The Lord is quite strict on one point, namely, that his holy name now longer be profaned or *chahal* (cf. 36.21) though knowing full well it will happen sometime in the future. Right after saying this he adds yet another instance of *yadah* but as pertaining to nations. This intimates that while Israel is destined to backslide in the future, nations around her will take notice and come over to the Lord and perhaps some day even supplant her. Those within Israel sensitive enough to this possibility both in the current generation and in those to come will be paying very close attention to how such events will unfold. Later with the advent of Christianity perhaps some devout Jews saw that new sect being one such fulfillment. This makes sense in light of vs. 8 when the Lord says that what had just been described is coming and calls it a "day."

Vss. 9-16 speak of Israel's despoilment of Gog and goes into some details as to the huge task of burying his dead, a task which vs. 13 claims will redound to Israel's honor when the Lord shows his glory. Thus burying the slain invaders will honor the Lord, *kavad* (cf. 28.22). Note that this contrasts with the dry bones coming to life described in Chapter Thirty-Seven.

Vs. 17-20 has Ezekiel speaking too the birds of the air, inviting them to come and devour

the remains of Gog's army. Although the previous verses described that the Israelites had buried them, there's no specific mention of these forces. Instead, vs. 18 has the "mighty and princes of the earth" which may apply to Gog's allies who were left exposed deliberately for the birds. Furthermore, vs. 17 calls this a sacrificial feast or *zevach* (cf. 20.28 but not noted there). These verses are reminiscent of Rev 19.21: "And the rest were slain by the sword of him who sits upon the horse, the sword that issues from his mouth; and all the birds were gorged with their flesh."

In vs. 21 the Lord sets his glory or *kavod* (cf. 11.22) literally "in" (*b-*) the nations compared with *betok* or in the middle of Israel in vs. 7 with regard to his holy name. Thus we have the divine name in one and the divine glory in the other, both balancing each other out, if you will. Vs. 22 has one more *yadah* (cf. vs. 7), this with regard to Israel, that is, once this divine glory is in the nations. It will not be for the present for "from that day forward" which historically doesn't pan out. Most likely the Lord is referring to a minority of Israelites who will remain faithful to this *yadah* and seek an alliance with the nations in their *yadah* of the Lord.

In vs. 23 the Lord embarrasses Israel, albeit not intentionally, by bringing up the reason for her exile which consists in having acted treacherously *mahal* (cf. 20.27). This caused the Lord to hide his face which resulted in the people being slain by the sword.

In vs. 25 the Lord says that despite the calamity just recounted, he will restore Jacob's fortunes, *shuv* and *shevyth*, the latter being derived from the former which also means captivity with both being found together in 16.53. After mentioning Jacob, the Lord speaks of Israel, the two being the same, having mercy upon her, *racham* being the verb from which the noun *rechem* is derived, womb or belly. "As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear him" [Ps 103.13]. Bound up with both is the Lord being jealous of his holy name, *qana'* (cf. 8.3).

Vs. 26 perhaps is the most important verse of this chapter where Israel will forget their shame, that is, not dwell on it and thus project it into the future, this will full knowledge that chances are high they will revert to former practices as noted already. The verb for "forget" is *nasa'* (cf. 27.2), literally to raise which here can be taken as lifting it as a burden and carrying it around. Included is forgetfulness of treachery against the Lord, *mahal* (cf. 20.27) also meaning transgression. As for such forgetting, it's intimately bound up with knowing (*yadah*) the Lord, such *yadah* being its opposite.

Vs. 27 continues as an extended sentence of the previous verse where the Lord speaks of returning his people from where they had been scattered, a sign of having vindicated his holiness, the verb being *qadash* as in 38.16. Then we have the last mention in this chapter of *yadah* (cf. vs. 22), of Israel knowing the Lord, this *yadah* resting on knowledge that the people had been exiled by the Lord who will leave no one scattered among the nations.

And so Chapter Thirty-Nine closes with the Lord promising not to hide his face any

longer, *satar*, that is, to remain undiscovered, this being the third such phrase (cf. vss. 23 and 24 but not mentioned there. Closely associated with this disclosure is a pouring out (*shaphak*, cf. 22.31) of the divine Spirit or *Ruach* on Israel (cf. 37.14).

Son of man: 2

*Davar* of the Lord: 0

Thus says the Lord: 3

6) yadah, 7) yadah, qodesh, betok, chalal, yadah, 13) kavad, 17) zevach, 21) kavod, 22) yadah, 23) mahal, 25) shuv, shevyth, qana', 26) nasa', mahal, 27) qadash, 28) yadah, 29) satar, shaphak, ruach

## Chapter Forty

1) In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was conquered, on that very day, the hand of the Lord was upon me 2) and brought me in the visions of God into the land of Israel and set me down upon a very high mountain on which was a structure like a city opposite me. 3) When he brought me there, behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like bronze with a line of flax and a measuring reed in his hand; and he was standing in the gateway. 4) And the man said to me, "**Son of man**, look with your eyes and hear with your ears and set your mind upon all that I shall show you, for you were brought here in order that I might show it to you; declare all that you see to the house of Israel." 5) And behold, there was a wall all around the outside of the temple area, and the length of the measuring reed in the man's hand was six long cubits, each being a cubit and a handbreadth in length; so he measured the thickness of the wall, one reed; and the height, one reed. 6) Then he went into the gateway facing east, going up its steps, and measured the threshold of the gate, one reed deep; 7) and the side rooms, one reed long, and one reed broad; and the space between the side rooms, five cubits; and the threshold of the gate by the vestibule of the gate at the inner end, one reed. 8) Then he measured the vestibule of the gateway, eight cubits; 9) and its jambs, two cubits; and the vestibule of the gate was at the inner end. 10) And there were three side rooms on either side of the east gate; the three were of the same size; and the jambs on either side were of the same size. 11) Then he measured the breadth of the opening of the gateway, ten cubits; and the breadth of the gateway, thirteen cubits. 12) There was a barrier before the side rooms, one cubit on either side; and the side rooms were six cubits on either side. 13) Then he measured the gate from the back of the one side room to the back of the other, a breadth of five and twenty cubits, from door to door. 14) He measured also the vestibule, twenty cubits; and round about the vestibule of the gateway was the court. 15) From the front of the gate at the entrance to the end of the inner vestibule of the gate was fifty cubits. 16) And the gateway had windows round about, narrowing inwards into their jambs in the side rooms, and likewise the vestibule had windows round about inside, and on the jambs were palm trees. 17) Then he brought me into the outer court; and behold, there were chambers and a pavement, round about the court; thirty chambers fronted on the pavement. 18) And the pavement ran along the side of the gates corresponding to the length of the gates; this was the lower pavement. 19) Then he measured the distance from the inner front of the lower gate to the outer front of the inner court, a hundred cubits. Then he went before me to the north, 20) and behold, there was a gate which faced toward the north, belonging to the outer court. He measured its length and its breadth. 21) Its side rooms, three on either side, and its jambs and its vestibule were of the same size as those of the first gate; its length was fifty

cubits and its breadth twenty-five cubits. 22) And its windows, its vestibule and its palm trees were of the same size as those of the gate which faced toward the east; and seven steps led up to it; and its vestibule was on the inside. 23) And opposite the gate on the north as on the east was a gate to the inner court; and he measured from gate to gate, a hundred cubits. 24) And he led me toward the south, and behold, there was a gate on the south; and he measured its jambs and its vestibule; they had the same size as the others. 25) And there were windows round about in it and in its vestibule like the windows of the others; its length was fifty cubits, and its breadth twenty-five cubits. 26) And there were seven steps leading up to it, and its vestibule was on the inside; and it had palm trees on its jambs, one on either side. 27) And there was a gate on the south of the inner court; and he measured from gate to gate toward the south, a hundred cubits. 28) Then he brought me to the inner court by the south gate, and he measured the south gate; it was of the same size as the others; 29) Its side rooms, its jambs, and its vestibule were of the same size as the others; and there were windows round about in it and in its vestibule; its length was fifty cubits and its breadth twenty-five cubits. 30) And there were vestibules round about, twenty-five cubits long and five cubits broad. 31) Its vestibule faced the outer court, and palm trees were on its jambs, and its stairway had eight steps. 32) Then he brought me to the inner court on the east side, and he measured the gate; it was of the same size as the others. 33) Its side rooms, its jambs and its vestibule were of the same size as the others; and there were windows round about in it and in its vestibule; its length was fifty cubits, and its breadth twenty-five cubits. 34) Its vestibule faced the outer court, and it had palm trees on its jambs, one on either side; and its stairway had eight steps. 35) Then he brought me to the north gate, and he measured it; it had the same size as the others. 36) Its side rooms, its jambs, and its vestibule were of the same size as the others; and it had windows round about; its length was fifty cubits and its breadth twenty-five cubits. 37) Its vestibule faced the outer court, and it had palm trees on its jambs, one on either side; and its stairway had eight steps. 38) There was a chamber with its door in the vestibule of the gate where the burnt offering was to be washed. 39) And in the vestibule of the gate were two tables on either side, on which the burnt offering and the sin offering and the guilt offering were to be slaughtered. 40) And on the outside of the vestibule at the entrance of the north gate were two tables; and on the other side of the vestibule of the gate were two tables. 41) Four tables were on the inside and four tables on the outside of the side of the gate, eight tables on which the sacrifices were to be slaughtered. 42) And there were also four tables of hewn stone for the burnt offering, a cubit and a half long and a cubit and a half broad and one cubit high on which the instruments were to be laid with which the burnt offerings and the sacrifices were slaughtered. 43) And hooks, a handbreadth long, were fastened round about within. And on the tables the flesh of the offering was to be laid. 44) Then he brought me from without into the inner court, and behold, there were two chambers in the inner court, one at the side of the north gate facing south, the other at the side of the south gate facing north. 45) And he said to me, This chamber which faces south is for the priests who have charge of the temple, 46) and the chamber which faces north is for the priests who have charge of the altar; these are the sons of Zadok who alone among the sons of Levi may come near to the Lord to minister to him. 47) And he measured the court, a hundred cubits long and a hundred cubits broad, foursquare; and the altar was in front of the temple. 48) Then he brought me to the vestibule of the temple and measured the jambs of the vestibule, five cubits on either side; and the breadth of the gate was fourteen cubits; and the sidewalls of the gate were three cubits on either side. 49) The length of the vestibule was twenty cubits and the breadth twelve cubits; and ten steps led up to it; and there were pillars beside the jambs on either side.

**Now with Israel's enemies out of the way, the remaining chapters of Book of Ezekiel**

shift to a description of the restored city and temple, Jerusalem not mentioned but presumed. Because a lot of measurements are involved, they will be either outlined or certain of them highlighted, if you will. As noted in Chapter Thirty-Eight, there's no further mention of *davar* of the Lord, it having been incarnated within both the city and temple. While going through the details, accounts taken from Moses, First Kings and Revelation are to be kept in mind as well as compared. As for the numerous measurements, they make greater sense when considering them in light of Israel as *'erets* or a nation which is keenly aware of it being distinct...measured off, if you will...from other peoples. A footnote to the RSV says that these last chapters are a continuation of the them of chapters 33-39. Also it's presumed that Ezekiel has served in Solomon's temple, so the details are familiar to him.

This chapter begins with a specific time, the last being mentioned in 33.21: "the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month, on the fifth day of the month." As for the one at hand, it refers to when "the city was conquered." Note the passive way of putting it and without identifying the city, as if to state as delicately yet truthfully a disastrous event in Israel's history. On that day the Lord's hand was upon Ezekiel, the account now following as from his own mouth, not as an agent for the *davar* of the Lord.

Vs. 2 speaks of visions or *mar'eh* (cf. 11.24) into which the Lord brought Ezekiel, the idea of entering suited for what he is to describe, namely, the land or *'erets* (cf. 38.16) of Israel and all that implies. There the Lord situates him on a "very high mountain" opposite a city or literally, "on the south." He describes it like a structure or *mibneh*, the only use of this word in the Bible, the height of which isn't given, that is, either higher or lower or on the same plane as Ezekiel. Regardless, Ezekiel had to cross this huge gap which he did effortlessly since it's done "in the visions of God" just noted.

In vs. 3 we have a man who appeared the color of bronze with measuring equipment at the city gate, apparently waiting for the prophet to accompany him to enter. Yet before entering this unidentified man informed Ezekiel to pay attention which is expressed three ways in vs. 3: look with eyes, hear with ears and set mind (lev, cf. 38.10) on what the man is to show the prophet. The first two have the prepositions *b-* or literally "in." Then Ezekiel's companion and guide reassures him that he is a designated guide for the purpose to declaring what he's about to Israel.

Vss. 5 through the rest of this lengthy chapter begin with a series of measurements which for the moment must have intrigued Ezekiel. Is this mysterious person going to make a plan of the temple in case it's destroyed or build a new one based on what he has measured? Is he in fact a human being or an angelic being? He description "like bronze" adds to the mystery. Keep in mind that this measuring process, very lengthy and detailed, is done "in the visions of God" which means it could be finished in a second or two. Chances are that St. John had this measuring in mind when composing that part of Revelation as pertaining to the heavenly city of Jerusalem depicted in 21.15+. The following is an outline of the verses, the places to be measured:

vs. 5: wall around outside of temple area which is measured, the verb being *madad* which is used frequently from now on.

vs. 6: gateway facing east

vs. 7: side rooms and threshold of gate by the gate's vestibule

vs. 8: vestibule of gate

vs. 9: jambs of the vestibule

vs. 10: three side rooms

vs. 11: opening of gateway

vs. 12: barrier before side rooms

vs. 13: gate from back of one side of the room to the back of the other

vs. 14: vestibule and court

vs. 15: front of gate at entrance to end of inner vestibule

vs. 16: gateway with windows

vs. 17: outer court with chambers and pavement

vs. 18: pavement corresponding to length of gates, the lower pavement

vs. 19: inner front of lower gate to out front of inner court

vs. 20: gate facing north

vs. 21: side rooms of gate facing north

vs. 22: windows, vestibule and decorative palm trees

vs. 23: gate to inner court

vs. 24: gate on the south

vs. 25: windows around the gate on the south

vs. 26: seven step with vestibule in side

vs. 27: gate on the south of inner court

vs. 28: south gate

vs. 29: side rooms of inner court

vs. 30: vestibules off the side rooms of inner court

vs. 31: vestibule facing outer court

vs. 32: inner court on east side with gate

vs. 33: side rooms, jambs and vestibule as same size

vs. 34: vestibule facing outer court with stairway of eight steps

vs. 35: north gate

vs. 36: side rooms, jambs, vestibule and windows of north gate

vs. 37: vestibule facing outer court with stairway of eight steps

vs. 38: camber in vestibule of the gate

vs. 39: in vestibule of gate are two tables for offerings which are burnt, for sin and for guilt

vs. 40: two tables outside the vestibule as well as on its other side

vs. 41: eight tables for sacrifices to be slaughtered

vs. 42: four tables of hewn stone for burnt offerings

vs. 43: hooks and tables on which the offering is to be placed

vs. 44: two chambers in inner court for the priests, etc, through vs. 47

vs. 48: vestibule of temple and gate

vs. 49: ten steps of vestibule with pillars and jambs

Note that in vs. 45 the mysterious man doing all this measuring speaks with Ezekiel for the first and only time during his measuring. The word “vestibule” appears numerous times, ‘ulam meaning something like a porch or that which is in front. One other reference is 1K 6.3 with regard to Solomon’s temple: “The vestibule in front of the nave of the house was twenty cubits long, equal to the width of the house, and ten cubits deep in front of the house.”

Son of man: 1

*Davar* of the Lord: 0

Thus says the Lord: 0

Know the Lord: 4

3) mar’eh, ‘erets, 2) mibneh, 4) lev, 5) madad, 7) ‘ulam

## Chapter Forty-One

1) Then he brought me to the nave, and measured the jambs; on each side six cubits was the breadth of the jambs. 2) And the breadth of the entrance was ten cubits; and the sidewalls of the entrance were five cubits on either side; and he measured the length of the nave forty cubits and its breadth, twenty cubits. 3) Then he went into the inner room and measured the jambs of the entrance, two cubits; and the breadth of the entrance, six cubits; and the sidewalls of the entrance, seven cubits. 4) And he measured the length of the room, twenty cubits and its breadth, twenty cubits beyond the nave. And he said to me, This is the most holy place. 5) Then he measured the wall of the temple, six cubits thick; and the breadth of the side chambers, four cubits round about the temple. 6) And the side chambers were in three stories, one over another, thirty in each story. There were offsets all around the wall of the temple to serve as supports for the side chambers so that they should not be supported by the wall of the temple. 7) And the side chambers became broader as they rose from story to story, corresponding to the enlargement of the offset from story to story round about the temple; on the side of the temple a stairway led upward, and thus one went up from the lowest story to the top story through the middle story. 8) I saw also that the temple had a raised platform round about; the foundations of the side chambers measured a full reed of six long cubits. 9) The thickness of the outer wall of the side chambers was five cubits; and the part of the platform which was left free was five cubits. Between the platform of the temple and the 10) chambers of the court was a breadth of twenty cubits round about the temple on every side. 11) And the doors of the side chambers opened on the part of the platform that was left free, one door toward the north and another door toward the south; and the breadth of the part that was left free was five cubits round about. 12) The building that was facing the temple yard on the west side was seventy cubits broad; and the wall of the building was five cubits thick round about and its length ninety cubits. 13) Then he measured the temple, a hundred cubits long; and the yard and the building with its walls, a hundred cubits long; 14) also the breadth of the east front of the temple and the yard, a hundred cubits. 15) Then he measured the length of the building facing the yard which was at the west and its walls on either side, a hundred cubits. The nave of the temple and the inner room and the outer vestibule 16) were paneled and round about all three had windows with recessed frames. Over against the threshold the temple was paneled with wood round about, from the floor up to the windows (now the windows were covered), 17) to the space above the door even to the inner room and on the outside. And on all the walls round about in the inner room and the nave were carved likenesses 18) of cherubim and palm trees, a palm

tree between cherub and cherub. Every cherub had two faces: 19) the face of a man toward the palm tree on the one side and the face of a young lion toward the palm tree on the other side. They were carved on the whole temple round about; 20) from the floor to above the door cherubim and palm trees were carved on the wall. 21) The doorposts of the nave were squared; and in front of the holy place was something resembling 22) an altar of wood, three cubits high, two cubits long and two cubits broad; its corners, its base, and its walls were of wood. He said to me, "This is the table which is before the Lord." 23) The nave and the holy place had each a double door. 24) The doors had two leaves apiece, two swinging leaves for each door. 25) And on the doors of the nave were carved cherubim and palm trees such as were carved on the walls; and there was a canopy of wood in front of the vestibule outside. 26) And there were recessed windows and palm trees on either side, on the sidewalls of the vestibule.

This is the first and only chapter that does not contain the four phrases son of man, *davar* of the Lord, thus says the Lord and know the Lord. It begins, as one would expect with a continuation of the temple's measurement, with the conjunctive *v-* translated as "then." Note that the man "like bronze" brings Ezekiel, this being the second bringing, if you will, since 40.3.

As with the previous chapter, the items measured are listed according to verses:

- vs. 1: nave and jambs
- vs. 2: entrance, side walls of entrance, nave
- vs. 3: inner room, entrance and side walls
- vs. 4: room which is the most holy place, *qodesh haqodeshym* (holy of holies)
- vs. 5: wall of temple
- vs. 6: side chambers in three stories
- vs. 7: side chambers and stairway
- vs. 8: raised platform of temple
- vs. 9: thickness of outer wall and platform
- vs. 10: chambers of the court
- vs. 11: doors of side chambers
- vs. 12: building facing the temple
- vs. 13: temple's length
- vs. 14: breadth of east front of temple and yard
- vs. 15: length of building facing the yard at the west, nave of temple and outer vestibule
- vs. 16: three windows
- vs. 17: space above the door, walls around in the inner room and nave
- vs. 18: cherubim with two faces
- vs. 19: faces of cherubim: man and young lion
- vs. 20: palm trees from floor to above the door
- vs. 21: doors of nave
- vs. 22: altar of wood before the holy place
- vs. 23: nave and holy place, each with a double door
- vs. 24: doors with two leaves
- vs. 25: cherubim and palm trees carved on doors of nave and canopy of wood

before the vestibule

vs. 26: recessed windows and palm trees on both sides of side walls of vestibule

Son of man: 0

*Davar* of the Lord: 0

Thus says the Lord: 0

Know the Lord: 0

## Chapter Forty-Two

1) Then he led me out into the inner court toward the north, and he brought me to the chambers which were opposite the temple yard and opposite the building on the north. 2) The length of the building which was on the north side was a hundred cubits and the breadth fifty cubits. 3) Adjoining the twenty cubits which belonged to the inner court and facing the pavement which belonged to the outer court was gallery against gallery in three stories. 4) And before the chambers was a passage inward, ten cubits wide and a hundred cubits long, and their doors were on the north. 5) Now the upper chambers were narrower, for the galleries took more away from them than from the lower and middle chambers in the building. 6) For they were in three stories, and they had no pillars like the pillars of the outer court; hence the upper chambers were set back from the ground more than the lower and the middle ones. 7) And there was a wall outside parallel to the chambers toward the outer court opposite the chambers, fifty cubits long. 8) For the chambers on the outer court were fifty cubits long while those opposite the temple were a hundred cubits long. 9) Below these chambers was an entrance on the east side as one enters them from the outer court, 10) where the outside wall begins. On the south also, opposite the yard and opposite the building, there were chambers 11) with a passage in front of them; they were similar to the chambers on the north, of the same length and breadth with the same exits and arrangements and doors. 12) And below the south chambers was an entrance on the east side, where one enters the passage, and opposite them was a dividing wall. 13) Then he said to me, "The north chambers and the south chambers opposite the yard are the holy chambers where the priests who approach the Lord shall eat the most holy offerings; there they shall put the most holy offerings—the cereal offering, the sin offering and the guilt offering, for the place is holy. 14) When the priests enter the holy place, they shall not go out of it into the outer court without laying there the garments in which they minister, for these are holy; they shall put on other garments before they go near to that which is for the people." 15) Now when he had finished measuring the interior of the temple area, he led me out by the gate which faced east and measured the temple area round about. 16) He measured the east side with the measuring reed, five hundred cubits by the measuring reed. 17) Then he turned and measured the north side, five hundred cubits by the measuring reed. 18) Then he turned and measured the south side, five hundred cubits by the measuring reed. 19) Then he turned to the west side and measured, five hundred cubits by the measuring reed. 20) He measured it on the four sides. It had a wall around it, five hundred cubits long and five hundred cubits broad, to make a separation between the holy and the common.

As with the last chapter, this one begins with the conjunctive *v-* translated as “then.” The man “like bronze” (40.3 is the only reference to him as such) continues to lead Ezekiel in the temple. Chances are both didn’t speak with each other, the man being too occupied with his measuring.

The verses are outlined briefly as follows:

- vs. inner court (the Hebrew has outer)
- 2) building on the north side
- 3) inner court facing the pavement of the outer court and galley which the **RSV** notes as “uncertain.”
- 4) a passage which is inward
- 5) upper chambers
- 6) upper chambers
- 7) wall outside and parallel to outer court
- 8) chambers on outer court and chambers opposite the temple
- 9) entrance from the outer court
- 10-11) chambers with a passage in front of them
- 12) entrance on the east side and a dividing wall
- 13) holy chambers for the priests to use to approach the holy place
- 14) garments for priests for entered the holy place
- 15) temple area round after, this after having measured the temple’s interior
- 16) east side of the temple
- 17) measured the west side
- 18) measured the south side
- 19) measured the west side
- 20) measured four sides with a wall around it to separate the holy and common areas

Son of man: 0

*Davar* of the Lord: 0

Thus says the Lord: 0

Know the Lord: 0

## Chapter Forty-Three

1) Afterward he brought me to the gate, the gate facing east. 2) And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the east; and the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with his glory. 3) And the vision I saw was like the vision which I had seen when he came to destroy the city and like the vision which I had seen by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face. 4) As the glory of the Lord entered the temple by the gate facing east, 5) the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the temple. 6) While the man was standing beside me, I heard one speaking to me out of the temple; 7) and he said to me, "**Son of man**, this is the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet where I will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel for ever. And the house of Israel shall no more defile my holy name, neither they nor their kings by their harlotry and by the dead bodies of their kings, 8) by setting their threshold by my threshold and their doorposts beside my doorposts with only a wall between me and them. They have defiled my holy name by their abominations which they have committed, so I have consumed them in my

anger. 9) Now let them put away their idolatry and the dead bodies of their kings far from me, and I will dwell in their midst for ever. 10) "And you, **son of man**, describe to the house of Israel the temple and its appearance and plan, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities. 11) And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, portray the temple, its arrangement, its exits and its entrances and its whole form; and make known to them all its ordinances and all its laws; and write it down in their sight so that they may observe and perform all its laws and all its ordinances. 12) This is the law of the temple: the whole territory round about upon the top of the mountain shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the temple. 13) "These are the dimensions of the altar by cubits (the cubit being a cubit and a handbreadth): its base shall be one cubit high and one cubit broad with a rim of one span around its edge. And this shall be the height of the altar: 14) from the base on the ground to the lower ledge, two cubits with a breadth of one cubit; and from the smaller ledge to the larger ledge four cubits with a breadth of one cubit; 15) and the altar hearth, four cubits; and from the altar hearth projecting upward, four horns, one cubit high. 16) The altar hearth shall be square, twelve cubits long by twelve broad. 17) The ledge also shall be square, fourteen cubits long by fourteen broad with a rim around it half a cubit broad and its base one cubit round about. The steps of the altar shall face east." 18) And he said to me, "**Son of man, thus says the Lord God:** These are the ordinances for the altar: On the day when it is erected for offering burnt offerings upon it and for throwing blood against it, 19) you shall give to the Levitical priests of the family of Zadok, who draw near to me to minister to me, says the Lord God, a bull for a sin offering. 20) And you shall take some of its blood and put it on the four horns of the altar and on the four corners of the ledge and upon the rim round about; thus you shall cleanse the altar and make atonement for it. 21) You shall also take the bull of the sin offering, and it shall be burnt in the appointed place belonging to the temple outside the sacred area. 22) And on the second day you shall offer a he-goat without blemish for a sin offering; and the altar shall be cleansed, as it was cleansed with the bull. 23) When you have finished cleansing it, you shall offer a bull without blemish and a ram from the flock without blemish. 24) You shall present them before the Lord, and the priests shall sprinkle salt upon them and offer them up as a burnt offering to the Lord. 25) For seven days you shall provide daily a goat for a sin offering; also a bull and a ram from the flock without blemish shall be provided. 26) Seven days shall they make atonement for the altar and purify it and so consecrate it. 27) And when they have completed these days, then from the eighth day onward the priests shall offer upon the altar your burnt offerings and your peace offerings; and I will accept you, says the Lord God."

The conjunctive *v-* translates here as “afterward” or immediately after the man who resembles bronze (cf. 40.3) had completed his measurements which he does later in Chapter Forty-Seven. Without uttering a single word which had been the case since the two had met, he brought Ezekiel to the gate facing east, *panah* (cf. 36.9). It’s the same gate from the Lord had departed (cf. 10.19+). Note that this gate has a presence while maintaining its direction and isn’t rendered simple as “east gate” or the like. This makes obvious sense in that God’s glory (*kavod*, cf. 39.21) came from that direction, i.e., sunrise which may have been the actual time. The sound (*qol*, also means voice; cf. 10.5) of this glory resembled many waters just like the living creatures of Ezekiel’s introductory vision: “And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of many waters” [1.24]. Not only is sound...voice...involved but light, the verb being ‘or as in Ps 77.18: “Your lightnings lighted up the world; the earth trembled and shook.”

Vs. 3 begins as “And the vision I saw” which in Hebrew runs as “And like the vision,” the noun being *mar’eh* (cf. 40.3). It resembles two other visions:

1) The one when the Lord destroyed (*shachath*, cf. 23.11) the city, rather, his coming to destroy it as depicted in the first chapter.

2) The visions by the river Chebar, the beginning of which serves to open this book. Ezekiel’s response as in 1.28 is to fall on his face and not look at the divine *kavod*. He could do this so as not to behold it, but it was impossible to block his ears from the *qol* of vs. 2.

Vs. 4 has the conjunctive *v-* translated as “as,” again, a way to show the close connection between a given sequence of events, the one at hand being the Lord’s entry through the gate facing east...again, not the “east gate.” This entry is reminiscent of Ps 24.7: “Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors! That the king of glory may come in.” As soon as this happened, vs. 5 (the conjunctive *v-*) has the Spirit (*Ruach*, cf. 39.29) lifting up Ezekiel and bringing him into the inner court. This is rendered by the noun *chatser* and the adjective *penymy*, both found together as in 8.16.

In vs. 6 Ezekiel speaks of the man described earlier as “like bronze” who is standing beside him, he too apparently having been lifted up by the divine *Ruach*. After all, he was responsible for the detailed measuring which proved to be an essential map for the *Ruach* to follow as it was filling each and every place the man had measured. With this overwhelming divine presence taking over the temple, Ezekiel heard someone speaking from within which turns out to be the Lord himself claiming it as his own and where he will dwell in the mist of the people. The verb is *shakan* as in 17.23 but not noted there used with *betok* (cf. 39.7) or in the very center of the people. This we have a twofold *shakan*: the temple and nation of Israel, the two blending into each other.

The Lord is quick to add in vs. 7 that no longer is Israel to defile (*tame’*, 37.23) his name, special emphasis being upon kings, this showing that no royal infringement is allowed in religious affairs. The Lord also points out that earlier kings had committed abominations, *tohevah* (cf. 33.28). One such reference to this is 5.11: “because you have defiled my sanctuary with all your detestable things and with all your abominations, therefore I will cut you down.” In vs. 9 s in vs. 7 the people are to put away the dead bodies of their kings which, as a footnote in the **RSV** points out, also means monuments, *peger* being the word which can apply to both. Perhaps this refers to tombs or statutes erected to them which quickly became objects of worship. Such removal is the condition for the *shakan/betok* noted again. If not, the Lord will depart the temple as he had done at the beginning of this book.

As has been shown thus far, Ezekiel accompanies what seems to be a man “like bronze” (never could he discern his true identity) as he went about measuring the temple top to bottom in preparation for the divine *ruach* to dwell there. Now in vs. 10 he is to describe (*nagad*, cf. 37.18; to announce, inform) to the house of Israel the following three:

1) The temple or *beyth* which is the same as house as in “house of Israel.”

2) Appearance which reads literally “they shall be confounded by their depravities” or *kalam* (cf. 36.32) and *havon* (cf. 35.5).

3) Plan or literally “they measure the outline,” *madad* (cf. 40.5) as used throughout and *taknyth* which has one other biblical reference, 28.12 but not noted there.

Vs. 11 is a lengthy and complex sentence where the Lord is telling Ezekiel to speak to the house of Israel under one condition, if you will, that they be ashamed (*kalam*, cf. vs. 10) of what they have done. The wording here is a bit confusing: the RSV has “portray the temple” whereas the text reads literally “the form of” or *token*, similar to *taknyth*, and has one other biblical reference as “number,” Ex 5.18: “Go now and work; for no straw shall be given you, yet you shall deliver the same number of bricks.”

Vs. 11 sums up the temple’s construction with the phrase “whole form,” the noun *tsurah* which occurs three times here and is found nowhere else in the Bible. It’s used with *choq* or ordinances (cf. 36.26) and a second mention of *tsurah* along with *torah* or law and the verb *yadah*, to know (cf. 22.26 and 39.28 respectively). Just as or more important that the mysterious man “like bronze” who had measured the temple, Ezekiel is to write down these observance before the Israelites. The reason literally put: “that they might keep (*shamar*, cf. 36.27) the whole form (third mention of *tsurah*) and all his laws, second mention of *choq*.

As for *torah* (cf. vs. 11) or law of the temple, it is related directly to the entire territory or *gevul* (cf. 11.10) on the top of the mountain, this most likely being Zion with *gevul* fundamentally meaning boundary. Within these bounds *gevul* is to be not just holy but “most holy,” *godesh* (cf. 41.4) used twice for emphasis. As for even further emphasis, vs. 12 closes with a repeat of its opening words, “Behold, this is the law of the temple.” Thus *torah* and land (where *gevul* as boundary stresses this) are the same, actually interchangeable.

Vss. 13-17 describe the dimensions of the altar (cf. 41.22), its base, height, hearth, ledge and steps, the last facing east in case the Lord has to make a quick exit as he had done at the beginning of the book. This isn’t specified, of course, but noted as a precaution just in case.

Vs. 18-27 or through the end of this chapter the Lord gives ordinances (*choq*, cf. vs. 11) summed up as follows: burnt offerings, throwing blood against it, sin offering to the Levitical priests, blood on four horns of the altar and corner of ledge as well as the rim in order to purify it, bull of the sin offering, offering of he-goat, offering of a bull and aram without blemish, sprinkle salt upon the altar, a goat for sin offering for seven days, atonement lasting seven days, after which the priests offering burnt and peace offerings. Once all these are done, the Lord will accept those who make the offerings, *ratsah* being the verb (cf. 20.41) which also means to be pleased.

Son of man: 3

*Davar* of the Lord: 0

Thus says the Lord: 1

Know the Lord: 0

1) panah, kavod, 2) qol, 'or, 3) mar'eh, shachath, 5) ruach, chatser, penymy, 7) shakan, betok, tame', 8) tohevah, 9) peger, 10) nagad, kalam, havon, madad, taknyth, 11) kalam, token, tsurah, shamar, choq, 12) torah, gevul, qodesh, 18) choq, 27) ratash

## Chapter Forty-Four

1) Then he brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary which faces east; and it was shut. 2) And he said to me, "This gate shall remain shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it; for the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered by it; therefore it shall remain shut. 3) Only the prince may sit in it to eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gate and shall go out by the same way." 4) Then he brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the temple; and I looked, and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the temple of the Lord; and I fell upon my face. 5) And the Lord said to me, "Son of man, mark well, see with your eyes and hear with your ears all that I shall tell you concerning all the ordinances of the temple of the Lord and all its laws; and mark well those who may be admitted to the temple and all those who are to be excluded from the sanctuary. 6) And say to the rebellious house, to the house of Israel, **Thus says the Lord God:** O house of Israel, let there be an end to all your abominations 7) in admitting foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, to be in my sanctuary, profaning it when you offer to me my food, the fat and the blood. You have broken my covenant in addition to all your abominations. 8) And you have not kept charge of my holy things; but you have set foreigners to keep my charge in my sanctuary. 9) "Therefore **thus says the Lord God:** No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh of all the foreigners who are among the people of Israel shall enter my sanctuary. 10) But the Levites who went far from me, going astray from me after their idols when Israel went astray, shall bear their punishment. 11) They shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the temple and serving in the temple; they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall attend on the people to serve them. 12) Because they ministered to them before their idols and became a stumbling block of iniquity to the house of Israel, therefore I have sworn concerning them, says the Lord God, that they shall bear their punishment. 13) They shall not come near to me to serve me as priest nor come near any of my sacred things and the things that are most sacred; but they shall bear their shame because of the abominations which they have committed. 14) Yet I will appoint them to keep charge of the temple, to do all its service and all that is to be done in it. 15) "But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept the charge of my sanctuary when the people of Israel went astray from me, shall come near to me to minister to me; and they shall attend on me to offer me the fat and the blood, says the Lord God; 16) they shall enter my sanctuary, and they shall approach my table, to minister to me, and they shall keep my charge. 17) When they enter the gates of the inner court, they shall wear linen garments; they shall have nothing of wool on them while they minister at the gates of the inner court and within. 18) They shall have linen turbans upon their heads and linen breeches upon their loins; they shall not gird themselves with anything that causes sweat. 19) And when they go out into the outer court to the people, they shall put off the garments in which they have been ministering and lay them in the holy chambers; and they shall put on other garments lest they communicate holiness to the people with their garments. 20) They shall not shave their heads or let their locks grow long; they shall only trim the hair of their heads. 21) No priest

shall drink wine when he enters the inner court. 22) They shall not marry a widow or a divorced woman but only a virgin of the stock of the house of Israel or a widow who is the widow of a priest. 23) They shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the common and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean. 24) In a controversy they shall act as judges, and they shall judge it according to my judgments. They shall keep my laws and my statutes in all my appointed feasts, and they shall keep my Sabbaths holy. 25) They shall not defile themselves by going near to a dead person; however, for father or mother, for son or daughter, for brother or unmarried sister they may defile themselves. 26) After he is defiled, he shall count for himself seven days, and then he shall be clean. 27) And on the day that he goes into the holy place, into the inner court, to minister in the holy place, he shall offer his sin offering, says the Lord God. 28) "They shall have no inheritance; I am their inheritance: and you shall give them no possession in Israel; I am their possession. 29) They shall eat the cereal offering, the sin offering and the guilt offering; and every devoted thing in Israel shall be theirs. 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; you shall also give to the priests the first of your coarse meal that a blessing may rest on your house. 31) The priests shall not eat of anything, whether bird or beast, that has died of itself or is torn.

The conjunctive *v-* beginning this new chapter translates as “then” after detailing the sacrifices to be done in the temple and has the Lord (according to the Hebrew whereas the **RSV** has ‘he’) addressing Ezekiel. We can assume also that the man “like bronze” was standing beside him, his job of measuring the temple now complete. Now this voice or *qol* brought the two of them to the sanctuary’s outer gate, again, facing east or not something like the “east gate” noted in 43.4. This gate happened to be shut to all coming and going because the glory of Lord had entered it as recounted in 43.2. Despite being shut, the prince or *nasy*’...this word being mentioned twice (cf. 19.1)...may sit in (*b-*) it. Perhaps the gate has some kind of small compartment within it or if not, right in front of it. As for prince, one such reference is to David in 34.24. From that position he will eat bread before the Lord and use the vestibule as a means of coming and going, this being a ceremonial meal while the priests are performing the designated sacrifices, etc.

Next the voice brings Ezekiel and presumably the man to the north gate in front of the temple which was filled with the divine *kavod* (cf. 43.1), making him fall on his face. But before this he “looked and behold,” *ra’ah* and *hineh* (cf. 18.28 and 37.4 respectively) expressing surprise, wonder and fear at having come across this *kavod*. Now the Lord addresses Ezekiel directly, telling him two things put in terms of “mark well” which reads literally as “place your heart” or *lev* (cf. 40.4). It’s used twice with regard to the following:

- 1) Seeing and hearing concerning what the Lord is about to tell him about the temple’s ordinances and laws, *choq* and *torah* (cf. 43.18 and 43.12 respectively).
- 2) Concerning those who enter the temple (literally, ‘to the entrance of’) and those to be excluded from the sanctuary or *miqdash* (cf. 37.28).

For the first time in a while in vs. 6 the Lord brings up Israel’s tendency to practice abominations or *tohevah* (cf. 3.8), calling the nation literally “rebellious;” “house” is lacking though is in the **RSV**, the noun *mery*’ (cf. 24.3) being used. As for the wording “end” with regard to *tohevah*, the text reads literally and rather strongly “much to you

from all your abominations.”

Vss. 7-8 detail the abominations which the Lord wishes to bring up with regard to his sanctuary: admitting foreigners who are not circumcised in heart as well as flesh which would profane the Lord’s sanctuary, having broken the covenant and not having kept charge of God’s holy things. Instead, the Israelites allowed foreigners to have control over the sanctuary.

Vs. 9 says that no foreigners, even those living among the Israelites, shall enter the Lord’s sanctuary. From this verse through vs. 14 the Lord chastises the Levites for having gone after idols (*gilulym*, cf. 37.23) which demotes, them to the role of ministers (cf. vs. 11). The RSV has a footnote in this regard, citing Dt 17.-18-18.8. Because of they concurred with the abominations committed by their fellow Israelites, they have become a stumbling block for the people...more than that, one of iniquity or *havon* (cf. 43.9). Despite this, the Lord will allow the Levites to be ministers in his sanctuary and perform various functions. They can do this provided they never lose sight of their dark past. In the end, the Lord will appoint them to keep charge of the temple, *mishmereth* (vs. 14; cf. 40.46 but not noted there) suggestive of keeping watch as from its verbal root.

In sum, the Lord won’t allow the “regular” Levites to come near or *nagash* (also as to oppress or to force to work; cf. 9.6 but not noted there), a verb which contrasts with “sacred things” or those which are *qodesh* (cf. 43.12) or those set apart. *Nagash* seems to make the *qodesh* even further apart, intensified, if you will, by the Levites having to bear their shame or *kelimah* (cf. 39.26 but not noted there). Surely there must have been some Levites who were faithful to the Lord, but given the corporate nature of Israel, the sin of a few tainted the whole.

In vs. 15 we have another class of Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who didn’t fall away from the Lord. They are to take the place of the former though there is no specific mention of them in this book. Apparently these sons of Zadok didn’t participate in any apostasy or when the people went astray from the Lord, *tahah* (cf. 14.11). As for their historical roots, cf. 2Sam 15.24+ with regard to the ark of the covenant. As the verse at hand recounts from that incident, these priests kept charge of the sanctuary, the noun being *mishmereth* and the verb from which it’s derived, *shamar* (cf. vs. 2 and 43.11 respectively). Both are mentioned again in the next verse (16). As for their *shamar*, it stands in sharp contrast to the Israelites who had gone astray, *tahah* (cf. vs. 10).

Vss. 16 through the end of this chapter deal with various duties and obligations, liturgical and teaching which belong to these sons of Zadok. Chief among the latter is teaching their congregation the difference between holy and common, *qodesh* and *chol*, this distinction being made in 22.26. Also they are to show how to distinguish between unclean and clean, *tame’* and *tahor*, this also noted in 22.26.

True to the original vocation of a Levitical priest, the sons of Zadok shall have no

inheritance although vs. 28 reads literally “as an inheritance.” “To the tribe of Levi alone Moses gave no inheritance; the offerings by fire to the Lord God of Israel are their inheritance” [Jos 13.14]. There follows from this voluntary poverty, if you will, offerings given to them by the people.

All this has personal ramifications for Ezekiel. He is a Levite though there’s no mention whether he belongs to the Levites reduced to ministers or is a son of Zadok. Regardless, in spirit definitely he belongs to the latter.

*Davar* of the Lord: 0

Thus says the Lord: 2

Know the Lord: 0

3) nasy’, 4) kavod, ra’ah, hineh, 5) lev, choq, torah, miqdash, 6) tohevah, mery’, 10) gilulyim, tahah, havon, 12) havon, 13) nagash, qodesh, kelimah, 14) mishmereth, 15) mishmereth, shamar, tahah, qarav, 16) qodesh, chol, tame’, tahor

## Chapter Forty-Five

1) "When you allot the land as a possession, you shall set apart for the Lord a portion of the land as a holy district, twenty-five thousand cubits long and twenty thousand cubits broad; it shall be holy throughout its whole extent. 2) Of this a square plot of five hundred by five hundred cubits shall be for the sanctuary with fifty cubits for an open space around it. 3) And in the holy district you shall measure off a section twenty-five thousand cubits long and ten thousand broad in which shall be the sanctuary, the most holy place. 4) It shall be the holy portion of the land; it shall be for the priests who minister in the sanctuary and approach the Lord to minister to him; and it shall be a place for their houses and a holy place for the sanctuary. 5) Another section, twenty-five thousand cubits long and ten thousand cubits broad, shall be for the Levites who minister at the temple as their possession for cities to live in. 6) "Alongside the portion set apart as the holy district you shall assign for the possession of the city an area five thousand cubits broad, and twenty-five thousand cubits long; it shall belong to the whole house of Israel. 7) "And to the prince shall belong the land on both sides of the holy district and the property of the city, alongside the holy district and the property of the city, on the west and on the east, corresponding in length to one of the tribal portions and extending from the western to the eastern boundary of the land. 8) It is to be his property in Israel. And my princes shall no more oppress my people; but they shall let the house of Israel have the land according to their tribes. 9) "Thus says the Lord God: Enough, O princes of Israel! Put away violence and oppression and execute justice and righteousness; cease your evictions of my people, says the Lord God. 10) "You shall have just balances, a just ephah and a just bath. 11) The ephah and the bath shall be of the same measure, the bath containing one tenth of a homer and the ephah one tenth of a homer; the homer shall be the standard measure. 12) The shekel shall be twenty gerahs; five shekels shall be five shekels, and ten shekels shall be ten shekels, and your mina shall be fifty shekels. 13) "This is the offering which you shall make: one sixth of an ephah from each homer of wheat and one sixth of an ephah from each homer of barley 14) and as the fixed portion of oil, one tenth of a bath from each cor (the cor, like the homer, contains ten baths); 15) and one sheep from every flock of two hundred from the families of Israel. This is the offering for cereal offerings, burnt offerings and peace offerings, to make

atonement for them, says the Lord God. 16) All the people of the land shall give this offering to the prince in Israel. 17) It shall be the prince's duty to furnish the burnt offerings, cereal offerings and drink offerings at the feasts, the new moons and the Sabbaths, all the appointed feasts of the house of Israel: he shall provide the sin offerings, cereal offerings, burnt offerings and peace offerings to make atonement for the house of Israel. 18) "Thus says the Lord God: In the first month, on the first day of the month, you shall take a young bull without blemish and cleanse the sanctuary. 19) The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering and put it on the doorposts of the temple, the four corners of the ledge of the altar and the posts of the gate of the inner court. 20) You shall do the same on the seventh day of the month for any one who has sinned through error or ignorance; so you shall make atonement for the temple. 21) "In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall celebrate the feast of the passover, and for seven days unleavened bread shall be eaten. 22) On that day the prince shall provide for himself and all the people of the land a young bull for a sin offering. 23) And on the seven days of the festival he shall provide as a burnt offering to the Lord seven young bulls and seven rams without blemish on each of the seven days; and a he-goat daily for a sin offering. 24) And he shall provide as a cereal offering an ephah for each bull, an ephah for each ram and a hin of oil to each ephah. 25) In the seventh month, on the fifteenth day of the month and for the seven days of the feast, he shall make the same provision for sin offerings, burnt offerings and cereal offerings, and for the oil.

This chapter begins with the conjunctive *v-* translated as “when” and pertains to allotting the land as a possession, that is, upon Israel’s return from Babylon. The verb is *naphal* (cf. 11.5) means to fall and suggests the casting of dice or something similar and is related to *nachalah* (cf. 44.28 but not noted there). Within this possession is to be a portion for the Lord, *terumah* (cf. 20.40) and is to be holy (*qodesh*, cf. 44.16) throughout meaning it is to be treated not unlike the sacred precincts of the temple.

Vss. 3-8 go into some detail with regard to the “holy district” of the RSV which reads in Hebrew as “from this measurement you shall measure.” This pertains to the most holy place, *qodesh haqodeshym* (cf. 41.4). It will be a holy portion of the land, *qodesh* again with *‘erets*, the noun prefaced with the preposition *min-* or “from.” The words of vs. 8 are very important: “my princes shall no more oppress my people,” *yanah* (cf. 22.7) meaning that the rulers won’t do wrong thereby ensuring peace and stability. This is followed in vs. 9 by the Lord telling the princes to put away all sorts of violence.

This emphasis upon measuring out the land of Israel after having returned from exile intimates that the Babylonians did a pretty thorough job of destroying the country. Such devastation provided an opportunity for other peoples to come in and usurp the land. As for the measuring itself—and that includes what pertains to the temple discussed earlier—it can be seen in light of Rev 21.15 where one of the angels with John measured the heavenly Jerusalem. Perhaps while the Lord was communicating this to Ezekiel he had in mind the allotment of land done once Joshua had conquered Canaan. The details are laid out in chapters thirteen through twenty-one, a fairly substantial part of the book.

So once the land had been divided up accordingly, the process of measurement is reflected in having proper balances, etc., for conducting business as described in vss.

10-12. The remaining part of this chapter continue the theme of measuring with regard to celebrations, especially the Passover where the number seven dominates as pertaining to days and months. All this is very satisfying because it reflects a desire to have a determined place to call home with a special place set aside for the Lord. All measurements flow from opening words of this chapter, that is, setting aside a holy place for the Lord. Without that, everything here would be simply a bunch of meaningless numbers.

*Davar* of the Lord: 0

Thus says the Lord: 2

Know the Lord: 0

1) naphal, nachalah, terumah, qodesh, 4) qodesh, 8) yanah

## Chapter Forty-Six

1) **"Thus says the Lord God:** The gate of the inner court that faces east shall be shut on the six working days; but on the Sabbath day it shall be opened and on the day of the new moon it shall be opened. 2) The prince shall enter by the vestibule of the gate from without and shall take his stand by the post of the gate. The priests shall offer his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate. Then he shall go out, but the gate shall not be shut until evening. 3) The people of the land shall worship at the entrance of that gate before the Lord on the Sabbaths and on the new moons. 4) The burnt offering that the prince offers to the Lord on the Sabbath day shall be six lambs without blemish and a ram without blemish; 5) and the cereal offering with the ram shall be an ephah, and the cereal offering with the lambs shall be as much as he is able, together with a hin of oil to each ephah. 6) On the day of the new moon he shall offer a young bull without blemish and six lambs and a ram which shall be without blemish; 7) as a cereal offering he shall provide an ephah with the bull and an ephah with the ram, and with the lambs as much as he is able together with a hin of oil to each ephah. 8) When the prince enters, he shall go in by the vestibule of the gate, and he shall go out by the same way. 9) "When the people of the land come before the Lord at the appointed feasts, he who enters by the north gate to worship shall go out by the south gate; and he who enters by the south gate shall go out by the north gate: no one shall return by way of the gate by which he entered, but each shall go out straight ahead. 10) When they go in, the prince shall go in with them; and when they go out, he shall go out. 11) "At the feasts and the appointed seasons the cereal offering with a young bull shall be an ephah and with a ram an ephah and with the lambs as much as one is able to give together with a hin of oil to an ephah. 12) When the prince provides a freewill offering, either a burnt offering or peace offerings as a freewill offering to the Lord, the gate facing east shall be opened for him; and he shall offer his burnt offering or his peace offerings as he does on the Sabbath day. Then he shall go out, and after he has gone out the gate shall be shut. 13) "He shall provide a lamb a year old without blemish for a burnt offering to the Lord daily; morning by morning he shall provide it. 14) And he shall provide a cereal offering with it morning by morning, one sixth of an ephah and one third of a hin of oil to moisten the flour as a cereal offering to the Lord; this is the ordinance for the continual burnt offering. 15) Thus the lamb and the meal offering and the oil shall be provided morning by morning for a continual burnt offering. 16) **"Thus says the Lord God:** If the prince makes a gift to any of his sons out of his inheritance, it shall belong to his sons, it is their property by inheritance. 17) But if he makes a gift out of his inheritance to one of his servants,

it shall be his to the year of liberty; then it shall revert to the prince; only his sons may keep a gift from his inheritance. 18) The prince shall not take any of the inheritance of the people, thrusting them out of their property; he shall give his sons their inheritance out of his own property, so that none of my people shall be dispossessed of his property." 19) Then he brought me through the entrance which was at the side of the gate to the north row of the holy chambers for the priests; and there I saw a place at the extreme western end of them. 20) And he said to me, "This is the place where the priests shall boil the guilt offering and the sin offering and where they shall bake the cereal offering in order not to bring them out into the outer court and so communicate holiness to the people." 21) Then he brought me forth to the outer court and led me to the four corners of the court; and in each corner of the court there was a court— 22) in the four corners of the court were small courts, forty cubits long and thirty broad; the four were of the same size. 23) On the inside, around each of the four courts was a row of masonry with hearths made at the bottom of the rows round about. 24) Then he said to me, "These are the kitchens where those who minister at the temple shall boil the sacrifices of the people."

This chapter doesn't start off with the Lord speaking through Ezekiel though we can presume it does. Because it deals more directly with regulations concerning sacrifice and worship in the temple, perhaps the Lord wants to step in directly *sans* Ezekiel to make sure everything is clear to the participants.

Vss. 1-8 pertain to regulations concerning the prince or *nasy*' first mentioned in 44.3, the word "king" not being used here, the reason not given, but perhaps in deference to King David. The gate to the inner court or *chaser* (cf. 10.4) is to remain shut for six days when work is performed and open on the Sabbath day as well as the new moon, this most likely in imitation of the six days of creation followed by the day of rest. While the prince takes his place by the gate, the priests will offering his burnt offerings with the people worshipping at the gate's entrance. Here as well as in vs. 9 the people are called "people of the land" (*erets*) possibly because they are newly returned after their exile and wish to be associated with it.

Vs. 9 speaks of "appointed feasts" or *mohed* (cf. 36.38) where entry is by the north gate and departure by the south gate. Then vss. 11-15 speak of the prince's offering, lamb and meal offering, both being done "morning by morning" for a burnt offering which is continual (*tamyd*; cf. 39.14 but not noted there).

Vss. 16-18 deal with the prince making a gift to his sons out of inheritance but cannot take any from the people to rob them of personal possessions.

For the first time in this chapter vs. 19 has Ezekiel speaking of how the Lord brought him through the entrance to where the priests boil both guilt and sin offerings. Next Ezekiel is led to the outer court, that is, its four corners which contained smaller buildings where those who minister in the temple boil the food.

All in all the details of temple worship are preventive measures, if you will, from keeping the people to backslide into idolatry. Emphasis on the rituals, etc., are designed to

occupy their minds as well as hands in imitation of what those who engaged in idol worship are familiar with. In this way the Lord hopes to wean Israel away from idols and keep her rooted in true worship of him.

*Davar* of the Lord: 0

Thus says the Lord: 2

Know the Lord: 0

1) cheser, 2) nasy', 9) mohed, 15) tamyd

## Chapter Forty-Seven

1) Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east); and the water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. 2) Then he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me round on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east; and the water was coming out on the south side. 3) going on eastward with a line in his hand, the man measured a thousand cubits, and then led me through the water; and it was ankle-deep. 4) Again he measured a thousand and led me through the water; and it was knee-deep. Again he measured a thousand and led me through the water; and it was up to the loins. 5) Again he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen; it was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. 6) And he said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?" Then he led me back along the bank of the river. 7) As I went back, I saw upon the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. 8) And he said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah; and when it enters the stagnant waters of the sea, the water will become fresh. 9) And wherever the river goes every living creature which swarms will live, and there will be very many fish; for this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes. 10) Fishermen will stand beside the sea; from En-gedi to En-eglaim it will be a place for the spreading of nets; its fish will be of very many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea. 11) But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. 12) And on the banks on both sides of the river there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing." 13) **Thus says the Lord God:** "These are the boundaries by which you shall divide the land for inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph shall have two portions. 14) And you shall divide it equally; I swore to give it to your fathers, and this land shall fall to you as your inheritance. 15) "This shall be the boundary of the land: On the north side from the Great Sea by way of Hethlon to the entrance of Hamath and on to Zedad, 16) Berothah, Sibraim (which lies on the border between Damascus and Hamath) as far as Hazer-hatticon, which is on the border of Hauran. 17) So the boundary shall run from the sea to Hazar-enon, which is on the northern border of Damascus with the border of Hamath to the north. This shall be the north side. 18) "On the east side, the boundary shall run from Hazar-enon between Hauran and Damascus; along the Jordan between Gilead and the land of Israel; to the eastern sea and as far as Tamar. This shall be the east side. 19) "On the south side, it shall run from Tamar as far as the waters of Meribath-kadesh, thence along the Brook of Egypt to the Great Sea. This shall be the south side. 20) "On the west side the Great Sea shall be the boundary to a point opposite the entrance of Hamath. This shall be the west side. 21) "So

you shall divide this land among you according to the tribes of Israel. 22) You shall allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the aliens who reside among you and have begotten children among you. They shall be to you as native-born sons of Israel; with you they shall be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel. 23) In whatever tribe the alien resides, there you shall assign him his inheritance, says the Lord God.

This chapter begins with the familiar conjunctive *v-* translated as “then,” again meant to show the close connection between what had happened and the present. Vss. 1-12 deal with a river beginning from below the temple’s threshold toward the east or the direction to which the temple faces. This water comes out on the south side of the temple. All in all this image has one precedent and an image of another to come later. That is to say, one at the beginning of the Bible and another at the end.

The first concerns the garden of Eden which the Lord himself planted “in the east” in which he put the first man (cf. Gen 2.8). Then a river flowed from Eden and divided into four rivers, one of which is the Tigris which flows east (cf. vs. 14). The second image is from the last chapter of Revelation, the “river of the water of life” [22.1]. This water has its source from the throne belonging to God and the Lamb (Jesus Christ).

As for the river at hand, we have mention of “the man” or the one originally described as being “like bronze” who in vs. 3 measures a thousand cubits. He does this three other times after which the water becomes deeper until Ezekiel cannot cross without swimming. This in vs. 6 the man comes off with a kind of understatement to Ezekiel, “Son of man, have you seen this?”

Vss. 7-12 describe the life which flourishes as a result of the river flowing from the temple, “so everything will live where the river goes” [vs. 9]. After this the Lord says that such are the boundaries Ezekiel is to divine the land for Israel’s twelve tribes which means a new allotment or one other than originally laid out by Joshua when Israel first entered Canaan (cf. chapters 13-21 noted earlier). Vs. 14 has the Lord saying that such is the land or *‘erets* he swore to give to the present generation’s fathers. That is, it hearkens back to Abram in Gen 15.7: “I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession.”

Vss. 15-20 then describe the land’s boundary followed by giving each portion to Israel’s twelve tribes. Interestingly, aliens are included (cf. vs. 22) as well who will be as native-born, they as well as Israelites having the same inheritance. Some of these aliens might be from Babylon where the people had been held captive and decided to tag along.

*Davar* of the Lord: 0

Thus says the Lord: 1

Know the Lord: 0

## Chapter Forty-Eight

1) "These are the names of the tribes: Beginning at the northern border from the sea by way of Hethlon to the entrance of Hamath, as far as Hazar-enon (which is on the northern border of Damascus over against Hamath), and extending from the east side to the west, Dan, one portion. 2) Adjoining the territory of Dan from the east side to the west, Asher, one portion. 3) Adjoining the territory of Asher from the east side to the west, Naphtali, one portion. 4) Adjoining the territory of Naphtali from the east side to the west, Manasseh, one portion. 5) Adjoining the territory of Manasseh from the east side to the west, Ephraim, one portion. 6) Adjoining the territory of Ephraim from the east side to the west, Reuben, one portion. 7) Adjoining the territory of Reuben from the east side to the west, Judah, one portion. 8) "Adjoining the territory of Judah from the east side to the west shall be the portion which you shall set apart, twenty-five thousand cubits in breadth and in length equal to one of the tribal portions from the east side to the west with the sanctuary in the midst of it. 9) The portion which you shall set apart for the Lord shall be twenty-five thousand cubits in length, and twenty thousand in breadth. 10) These shall be the allotments of the holy portion: the priests shall have an allotment measuring twenty-five thousand cubits on the northern side, ten thousand cubits in breadth on the western side, ten thousand in breadth on the eastern side and twenty-five thousand in length on the southern side with the sanctuary of the Lord in the midst of it. 11) This shall be for the consecrated priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept my charge, who did not go astray when the people of Israel went astray as the Levites did. 12) And it shall belong to them as a special portion from the holy portion of the land, a most holy place, adjoining the territory of the Levites. 13) And alongside the territory of the priests, the Levites shall have an allotment twenty-five thousand cubits in length and ten thousand in breadth. The whole length shall be twenty-five thousand cubits and the breadth twenty thousand. 14) They shall not sell or exchange any of it; they shall not alienate this choice portion of the land, for it is holy to the Lord. 15) "The remainder, five thousand cubits in breadth and twenty-five thousand in length, shall be for ordinary use for the city, for dwellings and for open country. In the midst of it shall be the city; 16) and these shall be its dimensions: the north side four thousand five hundred cubits, the south side four thousand five hundred, the east side four thousand five hundred and the west side four thousand and five hundred. 17) And the city shall have open land: on the north two hundred and fifty cubits, on the south two hundred and fifty, on the east two hundred and fifty and on the west two hundred and fifty. 18) The remainder of the length alongside the holy portion shall be ten thousand cubits to the east, and ten thousand to the west, and it shall be alongside the holy portion. Its produce shall be food for the workers of the city. 19) And the workers of the city from all the tribes of Israel shall till it. 20) The whole portion which you shall set apart shall be twenty-five thousand cubits square, that is, the holy portion together with the property of the city. 21) "What remains on both sides of the holy portion and of the property of the city shall belong to the prince. Extending from the twenty-five thousand cubits of the holy portion to the east border and westward from the twenty-five thousand cubits to the west border, parallel to the tribal portions, it shall belong to the prince. The holy portion with the sanctuary of the temple in its midst 22) and the property of the Levites and the property of the city shall be in the midst of that which belongs to the prince. The portion of the prince shall lie between the territory of Judah and the territory of Benjamin. 23) "As for the rest of the tribes: from the east side to the west, Benjamin, one portion. 24) Adjoining the territory of Benjamin, from the east side to the west, Simeon, one portion. 25) Adjoining the territory of Simeon, from the east side to the west, Issachar, one portion. 26) Adjoining the territory of Issachar, from the east side to the west, Zebulun, one portion. 27) Adjoining the territory of Zebulun, from the east side to the west, Gad, one portion. 28) And adjoining the territory of Gad to the south, the boundary shall run from Tamar to the waters of Meribath-kadesh, thence along the Brook of Egypt to the Great Sea. 29)

This is the land which you shall allot as an inheritance among the tribes of Israel, and these are their several portions, says the Lord God. 30) "These shall be the exits of the city: On the north side, which is to be four thousand five hundred cubits by measure, 31) three gates, the gate of Reuben, the gate of Judah and the gate of Levi, the gates of the city being named after the tribes of Israel. 32) On the east side which is to be four thousand five hundred cubits, three gates, the gate of Joseph, the gate of Benjamin and the gate of Dan. 33) On the south side which is to be four thousand five hundred cubits by measure, three gates, the gate of Simeon, the gate of Issachar and the gate of Zebulun. 34) On the west side which is to be four thousand five hundred cubits, three gates, the gate of Gad, the gate of Asher and the gate of Naphtali. 35) The circumference of the city shall be eighteen thousand cubits. And the name of the city henceforth shall be The Lord is there."

This last chapter begins with the conjunctive, a final *v*- intimating the close connection between the land and the tribes with their allotted portions. One portion is called holy in vs. 10, *qodesh* (cf. 45.4) or for the priests, more specifically, for priests who are consecrated (*qadash*, cf. 39.27) or the sons of Zadok "who kept the charge of my sanctuary when the people of Israel went astray from me"[44.15]. Included are portions for the prince, that is, vss. 21-22.

Vs. 30 speaks of the city without naming it, presumably Jerusalem. It is to have three gates on all four sides, each gate named after the twelve tribes of Israel. The same is found in Rev 21.12: "It had a great high wall with twelve gates and at the gates twelve angels and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of sons of Israel were inscribed."

The very last verse of the Book of Ezekiel gives the name of the city (Jerusalem): "The Lord is there" (*YHWH Shamah*).

*Davar* of the Lord: 0

Thus says the Lord: 0

Know the Lord: 0

10) *qodesh*, 11) *qadash*

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