

Monday February 9th–Reading Ezekiel 10-11 (10:1-22; 11:22-25)

Ezekiel describes the terrifying and majestic departure of the Glory of the Lord from the Temple, as God's presence moves from the threshold to the eastern gate, carried by the same "wheels within wheels" and cherubim Ezekiel saw by the river. The vision shifts to the corrupt leaders in Jerusalem who arrogantly believe the city will protect them like a "cooking pot" protects meat, but God declares they will be dragged out to face judgment at the borders. Yet, amidst this abandonment, God offers a transformative promise: He will be a "sanctuary" for the exiles in Babylon and will eventually return them to the land, replacing their "hearts of stone" with a "heart of flesh" and a new spirit.

- 1. The Slow Departure (Ezekiel 10:18–19):** How does this "slow exit" reveal both God's holiness (which cannot dwell with sin) and His patience (giving the people every last second to repent)?
- 2. A Sanctuary in Exile (Ezekiel 11:16):** How do you learn to experience God Himself as your primary place of safety rather than a physical location or routine?

Tuesday February 10th–Reading Ezekiel 12-13 (12:21-28)

Ezekiel is commanded to perform another vivid "prophetic drama" by packing an exile's bag and digging through a wall in broad daylight to show the people that their king and their city are destined for captive flight. In chapter 13, God turns His attention to the "false prophets" who are whitewashing the nation's crumbling spiritual walls with messages of "peace" when there is no peace. God declares that He will send a stormy wind to tear down these flimsy structures and expose the "lying divinations" of those who hunt souls and deceive the vulnerable for their own profit.

- 1. The Proverb of Delay (Ezekiel 12:22, 27):** The people said, "The days go by and every vision comes to nothing." How do you guard against the spiritual apathy that sets in when God's timeline is different from ours?
- 2. Whitewashed Walls (Ezekiel 13:10–12):** Where are you currently "whitewashing" a problem—using spiritual-sounding language or "positive vibes" to cover up what needs a total tear-down and rebuild?

Wednesday February 11th–Reading Ezekiel 14-15 (15:1-8)

In Ezekiel 14, God confronts the elders of Israel who come to the prophet for guidance while secretly harboring "idols in their hearts," declaring that He will answer them not with words, but by judging them for their hypocrisy. God emphasizes that the city's guilt has become so profound that even the presence of three legendary righteous men—Noah, Daniel, and Job—could only save their own lives, not the nation. Chapter 15 then uses the scathing metaphor of a "useless vine" to describe Jerusalem, arguing that a vine branch is only valuable for its fruit; since it has failed to produce anything, it is good for nothing but to be thrown into the fire as fuel.

- 1. Idols in the Heart (Ezekiel 14:3–4):** How can you tell when a "good thing" (like a career, relationship, or hobby) has moved from a healthy interest to an "inner idol" that blocks your ability to hear from God?
- 2. The Limit of Intercession (Ezekiel 14:13–20):** Are you relying on the faith of a spouse, a parent, or your church community to "carry" you, rather than cultivating a personal, direct relationship with God?

Thursday February 12th—Reading Ezekiel 16-17 (16:3-14)

Ezekiel 16 is a stunning, graphic allegory depicting Jerusalem as an abandoned infant whom God rescued, raised, and married, only for her to use His lavish gifts to become a brazenly unfaithful wife who outdid even Sodom and Samaria in her depravity. Despite this betrayal, the chapter ends with a surprising promise that God will establish an "everlasting covenant" to atone for her. Chapter 17 follows with a "riddle" of two eagles representing Babylon and Egypt; it rebukes King Zedekiah for breaking his oath to Babylon in a futile attempt to seek help from Egypt, concluding with God's promise to personally plant a "tender sprig" that will grow into a magnificent cedar, symbolizing the future Messianic King.

- 1. The Amnesia of Grace (Ezekiel 16:22):** How does intentionally remembering your "spiritual rags-to-riches" story prevent you from becoming arrogant or unfaithful in seasons of prosperity?
- 2. The Tender Sprig (Ezekiel 17:22–24):** How do we trust God to grow something significant from the "lowly" or "small" things He has planted in your life?

Friday February 13th—Reading Ezekiel 18-19 (18:20-32)

Ezekiel 18 is a landmark chapter on **individual responsibility**, where God dismantles the popular proverb that children are punished for their

parents' sins, declaring instead that "the soul who sins shall die." God explains that a person's destiny is determined by their own current choices—righteousness or rebellion—rather than their family tree, concluding with a passionate plea for the people to "get a new heart" and live. Chapter 19 then shifts to a poetic "lament for the princes of Israel," using the imagery of a lioness whose cubs are captured and a fruitful vine that is uprooted and burned, symbolizing the tragic end of the Davidic dynasty under Babylonian judgment.

- 1. The Blame Game (Ezekiel 18:2–4):** In what ways are you tempted to use your family history, upbringing, or "the system" as an excuse to avoid taking personal responsibility today?
- 2. The Uprooted Vine (Ezekiel 19:10–14):** When you feel "uprooted" from a place of strength or influence, do you see it as an end to your story, or as an invitation to seek a source of water (God)?

Saturday February 14th—Reading Ezekiel 20-21 (20:1-44)

In Ezekiel 20, a group of elders comes to inquire of the Lord, but God refuses to be consulted by them, instead launching into a "shame-filled history" of Israel's repeated rebellions—from Egypt to the wilderness to the promised land. He reveals that He spared them only for the sake of His name, yet He promises a future "wilderness" purging where He will finally bring a remnant into a holy covenant. Chapter 21 then intensifies the mood with the "Song of the Sword," a terrifying poem describing God's sharpened and polished sword of judgment that is drawn against Jerusalem, marking the end of the Judean crown until the rightful King (the Messiah) comes to claim it.

- 1. For the Sake of His Name (Ezekiel 20:9, 14, 22):** How does it change your prayer life to realize that God's primary motivation for mercy is His own glory and reputation rather than your "goodness"?
- 2. The Sharpened Sword (Ezekiel 21:9–11):** How do you reconcile the "meek and mild" image of God with the "Divine Warrior" who eventually draws a sword against persistent, unrepentant injustice?

Life Application Focus: *3 summary points that come up in the week of readings. Write down another you came up with.*

1. You can't whitewash it.
2. God acts for His Name's sake.
3. God gave me a heart of flesh.
- 4.

FAITH@HOME GUIDE

February 8-14

A resource to be used for Family or Individual worship this week. The daily readings are listed and a shorter option is in () if time is short. One item for discussion in addition to questions on guide that is always helpful is to have people pick out a verse they liked and explain why.

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYERS

Prayers this week: See the Connect sheet for updated prayers

Cancer Care & Treatment: Sheila Finberg, Mark Thompson

Confirmation Students: Wyatt Probasco & Kenney Prow-Dockendorf

Families as we go through our membership: Mathew Benoit; Ryan Benoit; Bryan, Tana Bergstrasser; Lorin, Cindy Besser; Linda Bicondoa; Cathryn Bjorklund; Robert Bjorklund; Maxine Buttweiler; Timothy, Margaret, Hayle, Isabella Buttweiler; Todd, Tessa Buttweiler; Alex Cash; Marc, Kara, Joshua, Hannah Cassen; Raymond, Janice Christensen; Jason Clitty; Kurt, Cindy Clitty; Paul, Nancy Cloeter.

Questions to consider:

Who is someone I will support or encourage this week? What can I do and how will I do it?

Who do I know that is disconnected from the Lord that I can pray for and share my faith with and possibly invite?

Things to Commit to Memory this Week

1. The time period of Israel's history where they were living in Babylon: **Exile**
2. Priest who prophesied for God to the exiles in Babylon (Ezekiel 1-2): **Ezekiel**
3. Symbolic of false prophets who cover spiritual rot with "peaceful" lies: **whitewash**
4. First major promise in Ezekiel of an internal transformation: **Heart Transplant**
5. Even these 3 righteous men intercessors for Israel cannot save an unrepentant nation: **Noah, Daniel, and Job**
6. Ezekiel 11:19 "And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh."
7. Ezekiel 18:31 "Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel?"
8. Ezekiel 21:27 "A ruin, ruin, ruin I will make it. This also shall not be, until he comes, the one to whom judgment belongs, and I will give it to him."