

## **NOVEMBER 24**

This is a day to celebrate. Today is our last day in Ezekiel. For some people, this might be the first time you've read this book, and already, you might have a better grasp of what God is saying and doing through Ezekiel than many people who have been believers for years. Just think how much better you will understand the Lord and this book when you read it next year. Tomorrow we begin Daniel and you'll enjoy it.

The point for us as disciples isn't to know the book better than others. Our desire is to learn more about the heart of God, to know Him. He loves His people Israel, and He will faithfully guide every one of His promises to fulfillment. You learn how wise and loving and just He is. And then, some of what we are reading describes God doing great things that are still future, that are beyond our understanding of Him. These chapters today are my favorite chapters in Ezekiel.

### **Ezekiel 47-48**

#### **Ezekiel 47**

Vs. 1-12 There is a lot to observe here, but I'll just make some general comments.

This is a literal river. The fact that it mentions fishing on the Dead Sea shows this is a real thing. This river is also described in Zechariah 14:8, so we'll see it again. The river will divide and flow east and west, but here, we're only following it to the east. The entire ten-mile distance from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea will have trees lining both sides. At that point in world history, there will be a lot of hurt people all over the globe who will need healing. I don't know how those leaves will heal, but I imagine the British will turn them into a "cuppa." The leaves and the fruit will never run out, bearing new fruit every month. I've got to think the water will be pretty refreshing too. Just think of everything Jesus said about living water, and look at the first verses of Isaiah 55.

These people will witness and experience what Jesus said would be true of us when we are saved and have the Spirit within us. These will be living waters. So, knowing what the waters and trees are capable of, how do you make a figurative connection to what the Spirit is supposed to do within us, creating streams of living water? It's something interesting to think about. Is it for us personally only, or is it really for the harvest? The effect of the new life in us, as we follow Christ into dead and sick parts of the harvest, brings the water of life to the dead, see? ☺

Notice that in v. 11, the marshes remain salt. I know, practically, Israel will need salt; but even more than that, it will constantly show what an incredible, on-going miracle this river is.

This will give everyone in the world a reason to visit Jerusalem. Zechariah mentions that Jerusalem will still be elevated, but the rest of Israel will be as flat as a pancake. That will make hanging out around the river easy.

Vs. 13-20 Just a couple of notes here. First, notice that to the north, Israel will be above, and will include modern day Damascus, so Syria will belong to Israel. Then, to the south, the border will skirt along that very famous place, Kadesh-barnea, and then will go up the brook that was the border of Egypt. The Nile was not the border of Egypt, but was more in the middle of Egypt.

Vs. 21-23 These are the general rules of how the land will be divided.

#### **Ezekiel 48**

Vs. 1-29 Generally, the land will be divided in east-west bands from north to south, each tribe's land extending from the eastern to western border of the land.

It is interesting that Judah and Benjamin are north and south of the prince's portion. That is basically the land that Joshua gave them, but they were both tribes from which God chose kings.

David will be the prince or ruler of all of Israel. Each of these tribes will also need government, and as I suggested yesterday, I think that each of the twelve apostles will govern or judge these tribes. *You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* (Luke 22:28-30) As to who will govern the cities in Jerusalem and around the world, I wonder if the parables of the pounds and of the talents tell us anything. *And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.'* (Luke 19:17)

Vs. 30-35 Notice that the gates are named after the children of Jacob. On p. 1316 of the BKC-OT, Charlie Dyer makes some interesting observations about these groupings.

The city will be called “The Lord is There,” or literally in Hebrew, “Yahwehshammah.” Of course, the ACLU won’t like that, but Jesus won’t ask them. Everyone will know where the Lord is.

I wonder what the feeling was when the people in exile stood up after hearing this vision. They had this vision in their minds and hearts, but walked back to their houses in the land of Babylon, laborers in the country that God had just used to punish them and to destroy Jerusalem and the temple. This had to have been emotionally confusing, but it should also have given them some hope.

As disciples, we have a vision like this built into our hearts and minds because of our salvation. We know this “assignment” is temporary, and that we don’t belong here. We are here as foreigners and exiles (1 Peter 2:11), following our Lord in the harvest, living for Him, making disciples and looking forward. But we don’t look forward to a city or temple. We look forward to meeting our Lord and being with Him forever.

*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, <sup>12</sup>Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; <sup>13</sup>Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; <sup>14</sup>Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* (Titus 2:11-14 KJV)

### **1 Peter 2:11-3:7**

1 Peter 2:11-25

Vs. 11-12 Don’t these verses sound like the verse above in Titus? Peter and Paul were on the same wave-length and connected to the same server, running the same software. Notice how Peter keeps emphasizing that this world is not our home.

Vs. 13-17 Seriously, this is like a condensed version of Romans 13. The idea of good deeds here is that believers are evangelistically loving their neighbors, doing good stuff for them to open doors for the gospel. It is easy to argue with Christ’s message. It is hard to argue with His love.

Vs. 18-20 This is pretty clear. If you have to face punishment, let it be because you love Christ, not because you steal company time, spending too much time in the break room “witnessing.”

Vs. 21-25 This is such a great statement. We have been called to suffer in following Christ, bearing witness as Christ bore witness to His Father. In using the example of Jesus, behind these words, Peter is referring to Isaiah 53. Read Isaiah 53 and you’ll see this.

1 Peter 3:1-7

Vs. 1-6 These instructions are generally for all married women, but particularly for women facing the trial of an unbelieving husband.

Vs. 1-2 The Word is to be alive in them.

Vs. 3-4 This is like what Paul said to Timothy in 1 Timothy 2:8-9.

Vs. 5-6 Sarah did not think it was demeaning to be subject to Abraham. I think the word *frightening* here is the idea of a woman placing herself in God's hands, both for her future and for the result of trusting the Lord in obeying these commands. We're not talking about extreme situations of abuse here. In my experience as a pastor counseling couples, most women who resist submission to their husbands don't fully trust God.

V. 7 This is just one verse, but it says volumes. A man is to understand his wife and understand how God has made women. That is what living in an understanding way means. It is living purposefully and intelligently, putting into practice what God has revealed as true.

If a man doesn't heed this, his prayers will be hindered. It is hypocrisy to come before God for understanding and grace, when he will not extend that to his wife.

#### **Psalm 119:49-64**

As you read this, look again for all the ways David refers to the Word and all the ways he was feeling under pressure.

Vs. 49-50 Notice what David is saying here. Isn't this something God is saying to us all? Isn't this the reason we all need to be in the Word every day?

Vs. 51-53 Notice that it was the Word that gave David both the protection from the wicked, and an answer for the evil in the world.

Vs. 54-56 This is what made David a man after God's own heart. And this was happening in David's years of trials and running. Most people take a vacation from God when they are under pressure.

Vs. 57-62 The Lord was David's portion and he pursued God through the promises of His Word. What is remarkable is that David pursued God while he himself was being actively pursued by cruel and unjust people.

Vs. 63 If only this would always have been true of David.

V. 64 This is the real song of David, and again, it shows why David was a man after God's own heart.

#### **Proverbs 28:12-13**

V. 12 What is interesting here is that this principle is true, but as seen in Hebrews and Peter, during times of wickedness, disciples are not supposed to hide. We may work under the radar, but we are still working and following our Lord in the harvest. If we feel the oppression, so do the lost who need a savior, and we have an answer for them.

V. 13 I was reading today about Jesus warning His disciples against hypocrisy. And, I was reading in Isaiah 55, that if the wicked will forsake their way and turn to the Lord, He will have mercy and compassion upon them.

It is amazing, although there is so much Scripture and so many authors, if you listen closely, there really is only one Author, saying the same thing to us in so many different ways. He loves us and wants us to turn from our sin, turning to Him.