

Ezekiel

God's Glory & Greatness,
Israel's Renewal & Return

Introduction

- Prophet: יְחִזְקֵאל, May God strengthen, *priest*
- Date: 592-572 B.C. (1:3, 40:1; 2nd exile 597)
- Setting: Last days of Judah (*from Babylon*)
- Theme: **God's Glory & Greatness (1-32), Israel's Renewal & Return (33-48)**
- Message: ***Because of Zion's sin, God removes His glory. God's coming judgment will purify remnant, punish Israel's enemies and proclaim His greatness!***

Coming End (12-14)

- Object: ‘I have made you a sign for Israel’ (12)
 - *Captivity*: pack up, dig through wall, carry bag at dusk, cover face, sign of exile, eat & drink in fear
- Oracles: ‘Prophecy against prophets’ (12-13)
 - *Cynics* (12:21f): days lengthen, every vision perishes; days near, every vision fulfilled!
 - *Counterfeits* (13): false visions (*peace*), mislead (*whitewash*), exposed; magicians (*charms torn off*) discourage righteous, encourage sinners!

Coming End (12-14)

- Oppose: ‘Taken *idols* into their heart’ (14:1-11)
 - *Capture*: elders seek oracle, idolatry revealed, can’t tolerate, *purpose to capture hearts*, call to repent, certainty of divine opposition

How can we reconcile the message of God here with the character of God?

“And if the prophet is deceived (*enticed*) and speaks a word, **I, the LORD, have deceived that prophet**, and I will stretch out my hand against him and will destroy him.”

(Ezek. 14:9; cf. Jer. 20:7)

“God is not a man **that He should lie...**”

(Num. 23:19)

“**Deceive** and overpower him. Go out and do as you have proposed”

(1 Kgs. 22:22)

“The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. **Therefore, God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned** who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

(2 Thess. 2:9-12; cf. Rom. 1:24-25)

“God does allow people who suppress the truth to be reinforced with that suppression. Paul writes that for those who refuse to love the truth, God sends a delusion on them (2 Thess. 2:11-12). In the same way, God had sent a deceiving spirit on false prophets because they only prophesied the happy things that king Ahab wants to hear rather than truth (1 Kgs 22)”
(McQuilkin, *Biblical Ethics*, 508).

“Unrepentant kings and unrepentant people, who seek confirmation of their perverse ways, who clamor for reassurances of well-being, do not deserve a straight answer” (1 Kgs. 22; 2 Thess. 2:11)
(Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 435)

Coming End (12-14)

- Oppose: ‘Taken *idols* into their heart’ (14:1-11)
 - *Capture*: elders seek oracle, idolatry revealed, can’t tolerate, *purpose to capture hearts*, call to repent, certainty of divine opposition, *covenant purpose*.
- Only: ‘They alone would be delivered’ (12-23)
 - *Certain*: Israel sins, God judges (*famine, beasts, sword, pestilence*), godly preserve their lives *only!* ‘Survivors’ (Amos 3:12) will show reason for ruin!

Concrete Examples (15-17)

- Of no use: ‘Like the wood of the vine. . .’ (15)
 - *Consumed*: Just as a vine offers no use, except for fire, God has given up Judah to ruin for their sin.
- Offense: ‘Make known her abominations’ (16)
 - *City*: Jerusalem was of foreign origin (1-5), saved, sustained & espoused by God (6-14, beauty), moral & political whoring (15-34, no prostitute wage), divine & human judgment (35-43), more wicked than ‘sisters’ (44-58), God will remember covenant (59f)

Concrete Examples (15-17)

- Oath: ‘Surely, it is my oath that he despised’ (17)
 - *Cedar*: 1st eagle (Babylon) takes twig (Jehoiachin), plants seed, vine (Zedekiah) grows toward him; 2nd eagle (Egypt) arises, vine bends toward him - covenant broken (2 Chron. 36), judgment coming! but YHWH will plant new twig, *ideal David*

Coming End (18-24)

- Onus: ‘The soul who sins will die’ (18, Jer. 31:30)
[*Both true, God here stresses individual responsibility*]
 - *Case Studies*: righteous will live, wicked will die;
‘God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked’
Just: righteous turn-death, wicked turn-life, Repent!

“Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and *make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit*”
(Ezek. 18:30-31)

Where have we seen similar language? What contrast was present in those passages?

(Deut. 10:16, 30:6; Jer. 4:1, 31:33; Eze. 11:19, 36)

Coming End (18-24)

- Onus: ‘The soul who sins will die’ (18, Jer. 31:30)
 - *Case Studies*: righteous will live, wicked will die; ‘God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked’
 - Just*: righteous turn-death, wicked turn-life, Repent!
- Objects: ‘Your mother was a lioness, vine’ (19)
 - *Cut Off*: lioness (David, Gen. 49), 1st cub (Jehoahaz) to Egypt, 2nd cub (Jehoiakim) to Babylon (605, Jer. 22-23, 2 Kgs. 24, 2 Chron. 36:6); vine (David), torn (Jehoiachin to Babylon), no scepter (Zedekiah)

Coming End (18-24)

- Oracle: ‘I won’t be inquired of by you’ (20)
 - *Contrary* (1-32): (1) Egypt: remove, refused, renown (2) Sinai: rules, refused, renown (3) Desert: rules, rebelled, renown (4) Canaan: sacrifice, silence
 - *Covenant* (33-44): God will regather (purify & purge) renew covenant; Israel will regret sins, be forgiven
- Opposed: ‘I’m against you, will draw sword’ (21)
 - *Cut Off*: God’s ‘sword’ (Babylon) will destroy (groan, no optimism), Zedekiah judged, Babylon judged!

Coming End (18-24)

- Offense: ‘Declare all her abominations’ (22)
 - *Corrupt* (1-16): injustice, idolatry, oppress weak, profane sacred, sex crimes, bribery, unjust economy
‘I will consume your uncleanness out of you’ (15)
 - *Compare* (17-30): dross burned off by fire, unclean land - princes are lions devouring weak, officials are wolves destroying for dishonest gain, prophets whitewash evil deeds with false words, people are broken-down wall, none to repair
 - *Consume* (31): ‘returned their way on their head’

Coming End (18-24)

- Oholah, Oholibah: ‘There were two women’ (23)
 - *Covenants* (1-35): Samaria, Jerusalem played whore in Egypt (*idols?*); Samaria repeated adultery with Assyria (*alliances*), God gave her up to humiliation, exile & destruction (*exile*). Jerusalem became more corrupt, lusting after Assyria, Babylonia & Egypt. God would give her up, to drink the same cup!
 - *Child* (36-49): In addition, both added the worship of idols (*child sacrifice*), even profaning the temple!

Coming End (18-24)

- Objects: ‘On this very day . . .’ (24)
 - *Cauldron* (1-14): Just as Ezekiel was to cook a pot of meat with a strong fire, the people of Jerusalem would suffer intensely (*siege*). The removal of meat symbolized the exile of people, and the purging of pot’s impurity may describe the city’s destruction
 - *Comfort?* (15-27): Just as Ezekiel doesn’t mourn the death of his ‘delight,’ exiles shouldn’t mourn when their ‘delight’ is destroyed! Why? Sign of new era?

Compensated & Empty (25-32)

- Oracles: ‘Thus says the Lord GOD. . .’ (25-32)
 - ‘Cause you . . .
 - (1) Ammon, Moab, Edom & Philistia (25): celebrated downfall, mistreated God’s people in destruction
 - (2) Tyre (26-28): celebrated Judah’s fall for self-benefit (likely not economic, perhaps political reason) her demise & king (*not Satan*) are both taunted!
 - (3) Egypt (29-32): downfall of Egypt foretold, showing God’s people their sin in leaning on this broken reed, and proving that He alone is reliable!

Summary

After being taken to Babylon, Ezekiel delivers God's message to the exiles, using prophetic oracles, parables, and personal actions to speak about Jerusalem's coming judgment. Because of Judah's continued rebellion against Him, God would remove His glory from their presence. His judgment would purify the surviving remnant, punish Israel's enemies & proclaim God's greatness!