

Chronological Bible Study

Week 31:

A Valley of Dry Bones

Ezekiel 19:1-14; 22:23-31; 25-26; 32:1-32; 48:35

Psalm 137

Obediah 1-31

Jeremiah 52:28-30

Prayer of Transformation

Jesus, I receive Your righteousness, I release my sinfulness.

Jesus, I receive Your wholeness, I release my brokenness.

Jesus, I receive Your fullness, I release my emptiness.

Jesus I receive Your joy, I release my despair

I receive Your love, I release my selfishness

Jesus, I receive Your peace, I release my anxiety.

Jesus I receive Your joy, I release my despair.

Jesus, I receive Your rest, I release my striving.

Jesus, I receive Your clarity, I release my confusion.

Jesus, I receive Your power, I release my weakness.



Introductions

Describe your past week in weather terms:

Examples: Stormy, Cloudy, Mostly Sunny

Questions?

Comments?

Summary of This Week's Readings

- Jerusalem's Fall Explained
- Oracles Against Judah's Neighbors
- Obadiah
- Deportations to Babylon
- Ezekiel's Message of Hope
- Ezekiel's Apocalyptic Prophecies
- Ezekiel's Second Temple Vision
- The Glory of God Returns

Ezekiel (Part 2)

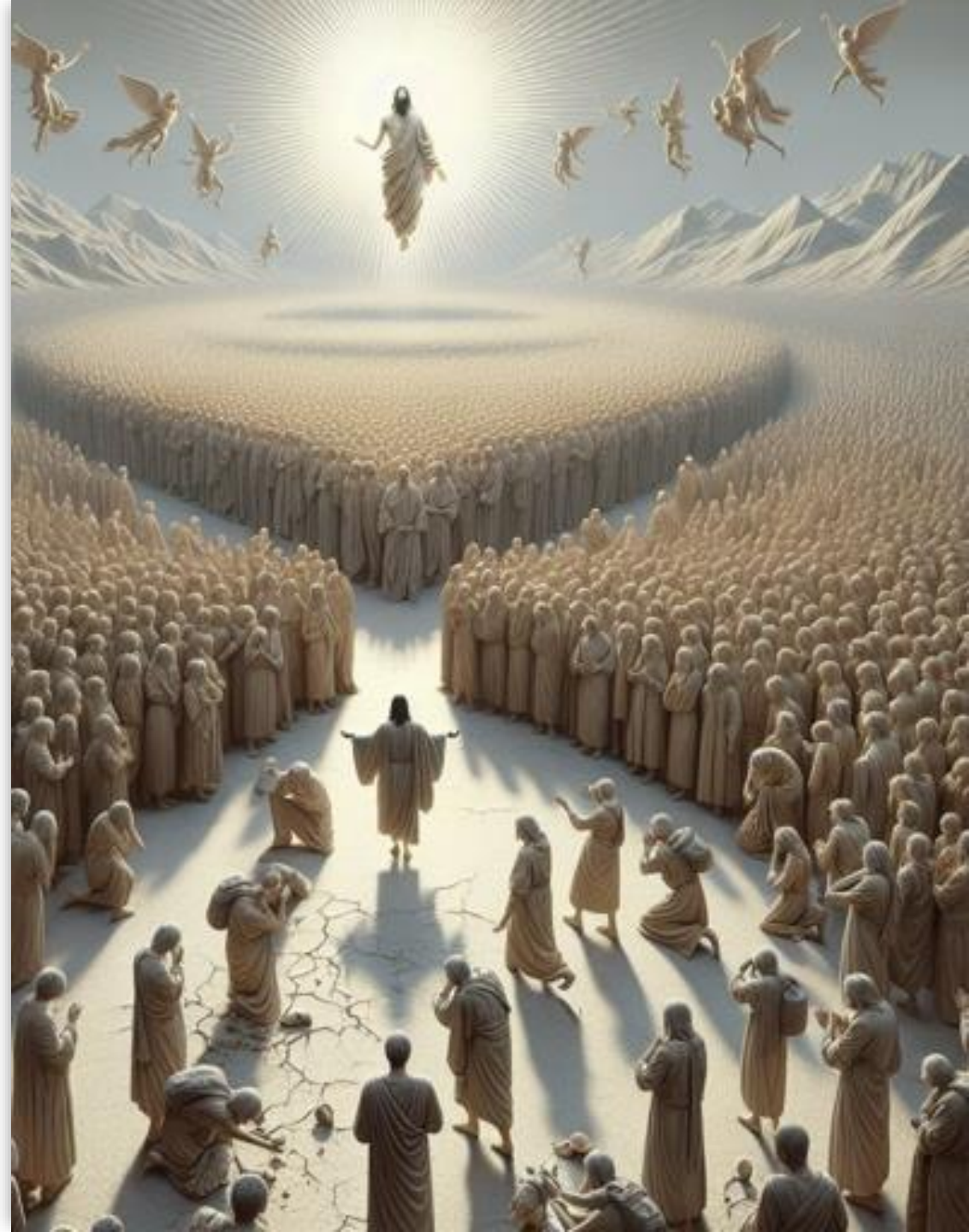
[Video Link](#)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDeCWW_Bnyw



News of Jerusalem's Fall Arrives in Babylon

- Message given 5 months after the temple burned (586 BC)
- Ezekiel's speech returns
- God informs Ezekiel about his exilic audience
- Lament for Israel's leaders
- Israel's guilt examined as the legal rationale for the demise of Jerusalem.



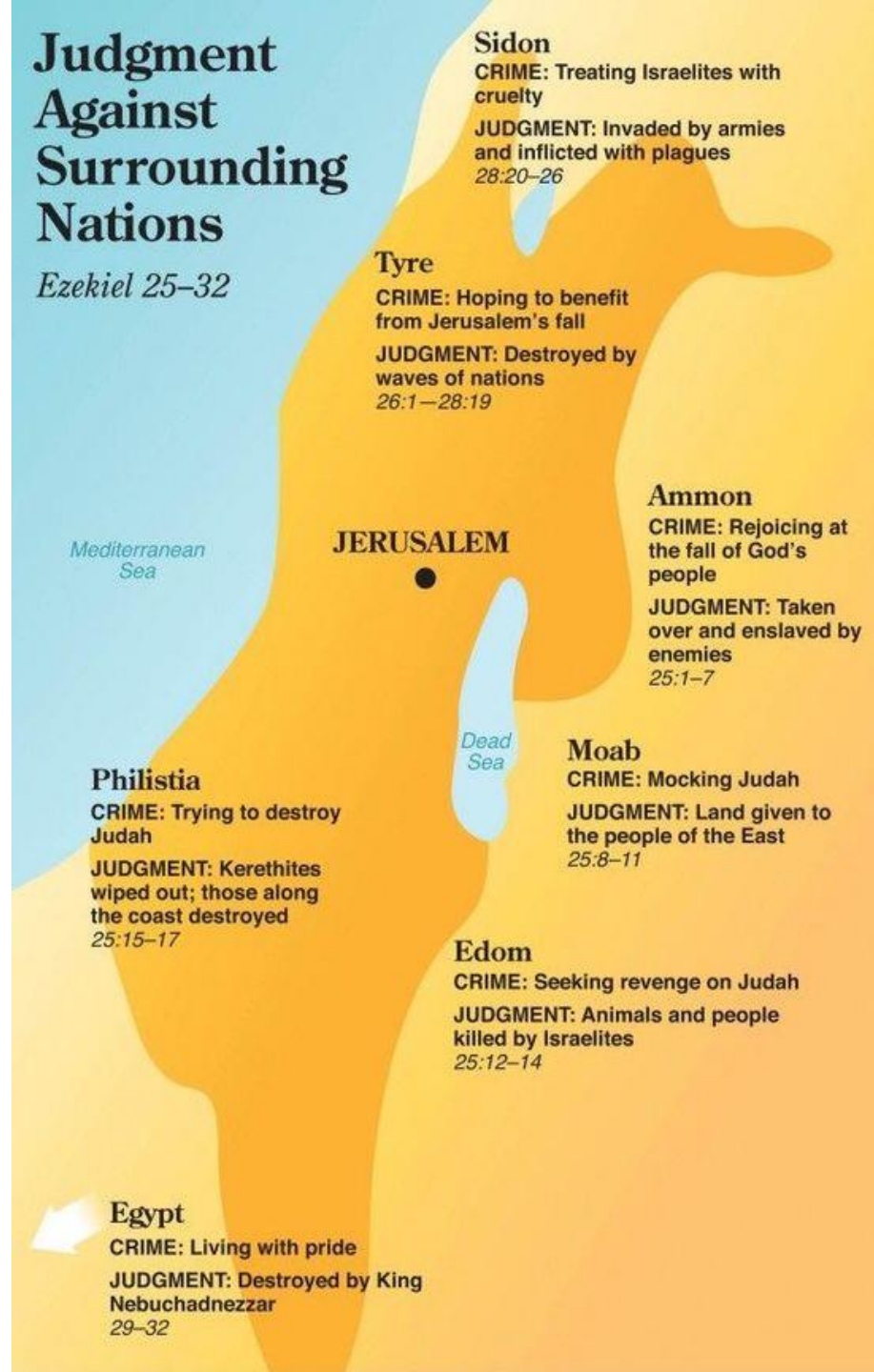


Oracles Against Judah's Neighbors

- Judah's neighbors act as enemies when attacked by Babylon.
- God first focused on judgment of His people, but he has not forgotten and would not neglect the judgment of the pagan nations surrounding Jerusalem and Judah
- The prophecies are a reminder that a day is coming when God will conform all who oppose him and his people.

Oracles Against Judah's Neighbors

- Repeated judgment sequence: Because they are evil....therefore God will judge them
- Clear cause and effect pattern
- The Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites are related to the Israelites through Lot and Esau.



Divine Justice

[Video Link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WdOzNSDbitM)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WdOzNSDbitM>



Psalm 137

OVERVIEW

- The congregation laments their past sufferings at the hands of Babylon and celebrate their loyalty to Jerusalem.
- The beginning of the psalm reminds us of the ill effects of power, while the final part testifies to God's justice.
- The theme of the psalm is "Remember Zion!" They remember Zion when they were in Babylon (past), they vow not to forget but to remember Jerusalem now (present), and they appeal to God to remember the day of Jerusalem (future).
- The Bible doesn't call us to a super-spiritual existence; this psalm talks about physical tears. We are given categories and language to speak to God and pray our pain and tears to Him.
- The psalm sings of resistance to Babylon and devotion to Jerusalem. The exiles kept their relation to Jerusalem alive during the exile in liturgies of lament. They promise not to forget Jerusalem. The singers make clear that their issue is whether God rules in the world in which they live in exile.
- Sometimes what once brought joy (in this case Jerusalem) brings pain. This psalm demands that the pain Israel's enemies sought for other nations would befall Babylon itself. While it doesn't sound like Jesus' teaching, we are reminded that God does not look the other way when his people are afflicted. God defends justice; rights will be wronged. We can trust God to do justice.

Obadiah

[Video Link](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4ogCrEoG5s>



Overview of Obadiah

- Shortest book in the Old Testament
- Narrated by Obadiah (the Lord's Servant)
- Book of poetic prophecies'
- Key theme is the lordship of God and his sovereignty over all humanity.
- Edom's kinship relationship with Israel should end in support rather than opposition of Judah
- God will restore Israel based on his covenant
- Judgment of other nations based on their response to God and his people
- The time for this judgment is the day of the lord.

Big Ideas in OBADIAH

God will punish the Edomites because of their poor treatment of Israel

Although Israel's enemies appear to prosper, God will give their lands to Israel



Ezekiel's Prophecy Against Edom and Hope for Israel's Restoration

- Edom represents the enemy
- The outcome for Israel is restoration
- God is against Israel's enemies
- The rightful inhabitants will repossess the land according to God's promises
- God's goal: You will know that I am LORD
- A new heart will replace the hearts of stone
- Return from exile is only a beginning of the fulfillment of restoration.





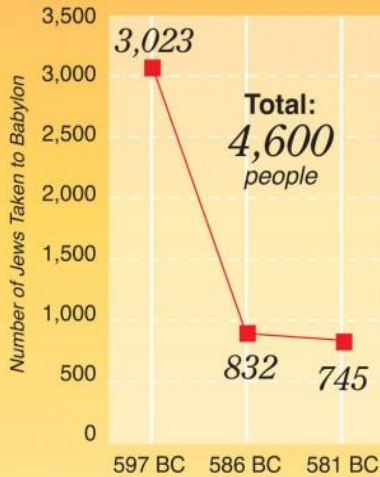
Discussion

Why was it wrong for Edom to rejoice when God punished Israel?

Exiled!

Jeremiah 52:28–30

Jews taken captive by
Nebuchadnezzar



Nebuchadnezzar removes three rounds of exiles after initially taking some members of the Israelite nobility and royal family in 605 BC (Daniel and his three friends were among this group; see Daniel 1:1–6). Ezekiel is taken captive eight years later in 597 BC.

Deportations

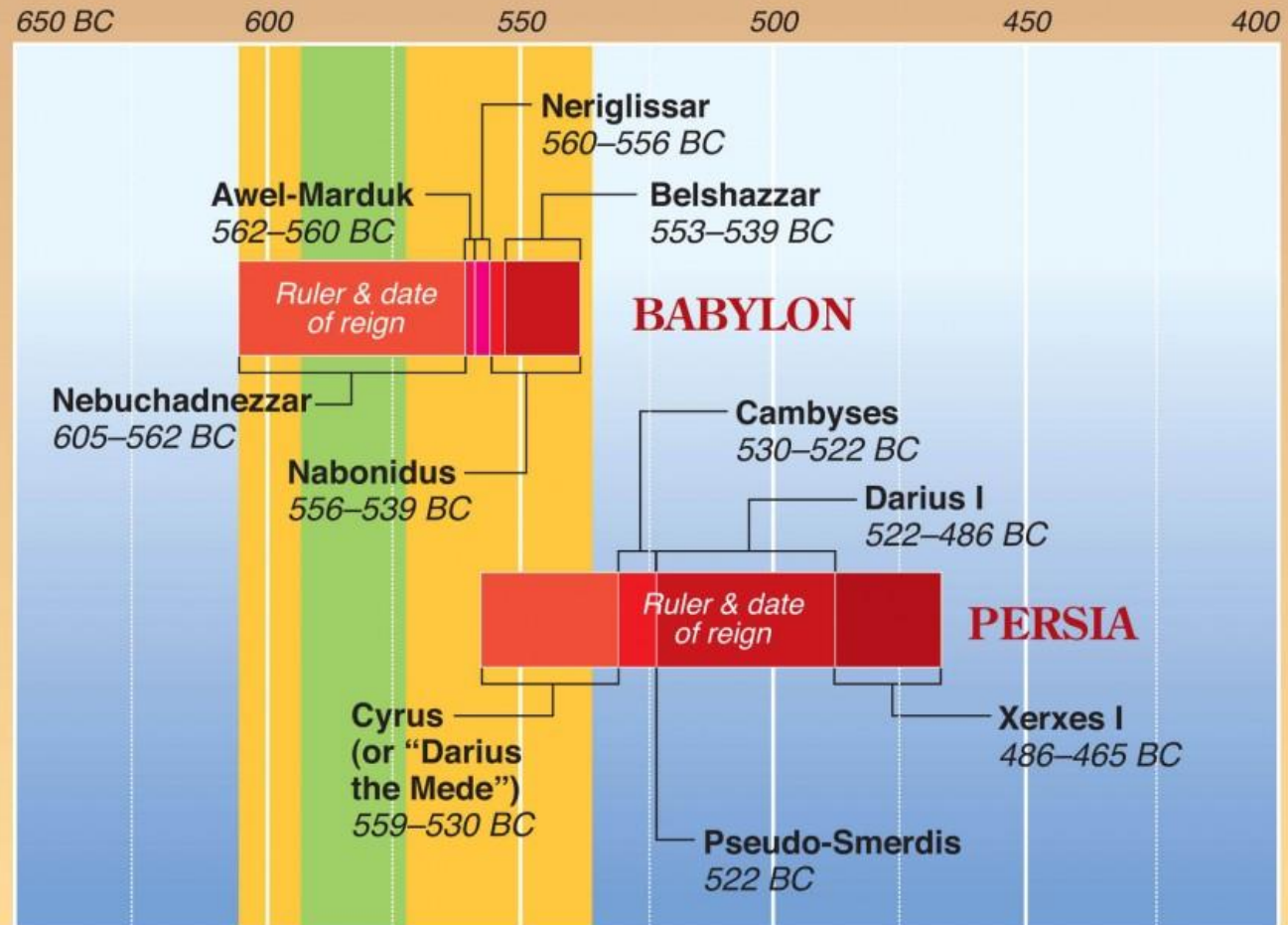
- First deportation in 605 shortly before Nebuchadnezzar came to throne. Likely included Daniel. Not included in Jeremiah 52.
- Second deportation was largest in 597 BC. Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin and replaced him with Zedekiah. Likely included Ezekiel.
- Third deportation in 586
- Fourth deportation in 581 BC may have been in response to the assassination of Gedaliah.

Two Empires, Two Prophets

Empires and rulers during the ministries of Daniel and Ezekiel

Daniel's ministry
approximately 605–530 BC (arrives
as exile in Babylon in 605 BC)

Ezekiel's ministry
593–571 BC (arrives as exile in
Babylon in 597 BC)





Ezekiel as Watchman

- After judgment against Israel and the nations Ezekiel offers words of hope.
- When Ezekiel hears Jerusalem has fallen he begins to speak of restoration.
- He resumes his role as watchman who must warn the people.
- Chapter 33 parallels Chapter 3
- People take ownership of their sin but are still skeptical of God's justice.

Son of Man

- In Judaism, Son of Man denotes mankind in contrast to God.
- Jesus referred to himself as Son of Man in three contexts
 - His earthly work
 - His coming suffering, death, and resurrection
 - His future coming in heavenly glory at final judgment.
- Apostles/early evangelists do not distinguish “Son of Man” sharply from Christ/Messiah.





Israel's Shepherd

- Israel needs a true shepherd as a leader
- The religious life of God's people will be revitalized
- Human leaders failed as shepherds
- Israel's true shepherd is God
- Through a David-like human figure the sheep will be saved and God's favors will flow.
- The messiah will fulfill God's new covenant with his people

The background of the slide is a painting depicting a vast, desolate valley. The ground is covered with a dense field of white, bleached bones, some of which are arranged in rows, suggesting a mass grave or a battlefield. The sky is a mix of brown and grey tones, with some lighter, hazy areas, creating a somber and atmospheric setting. The overall style is somewhat impressionistic, with visible brushstrokes and a focus on light and shadow.

The Valley of Dry Bones

- Imagery of a slain army that comes to life
- God causes life to come out of death
- There will be renewed life in Jerusalem
- God will also unify the nation under one king
- God will dwell with them.



Discussion

In the Valley of Dry Bones story (EZE 37), Hebrews used the word “ruach” for wind, breath and spirit. How is the description in EZE 37 different or similar to our New Testament understanding of the Holy Spirit?

God's Victory Over Nations

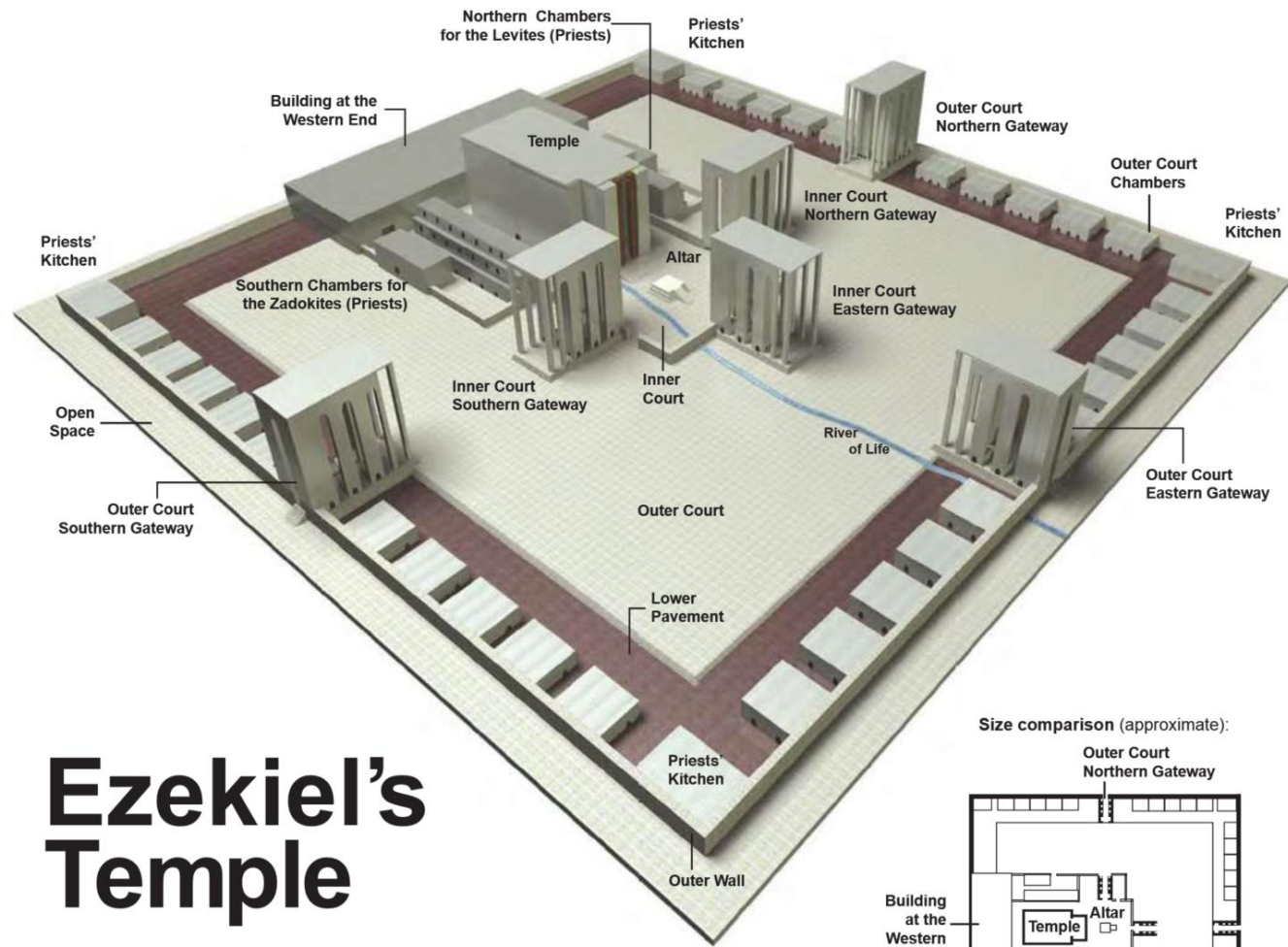
- An apocalyptic battle, at an unspecified time, is described
- God must destroy his enemies who live outside the promised land.
- Gog/Magog described as the enemy in the battle.
- God will back Israel and destroy the enemy.
- The divine purpose of the battle is the vindication of God's holiness and his supremacy over nations of evil.
- Victory reveals Israel's God is the true holy one and provide assurance and hope in the future.

Two Temples

[Video Link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQWqD3pM7X4)

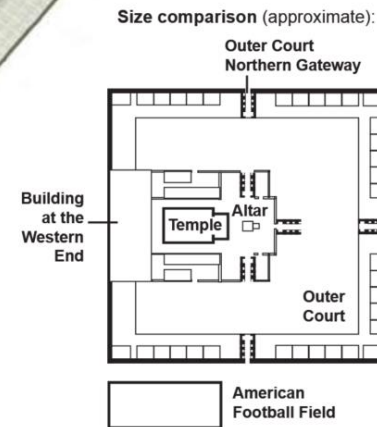
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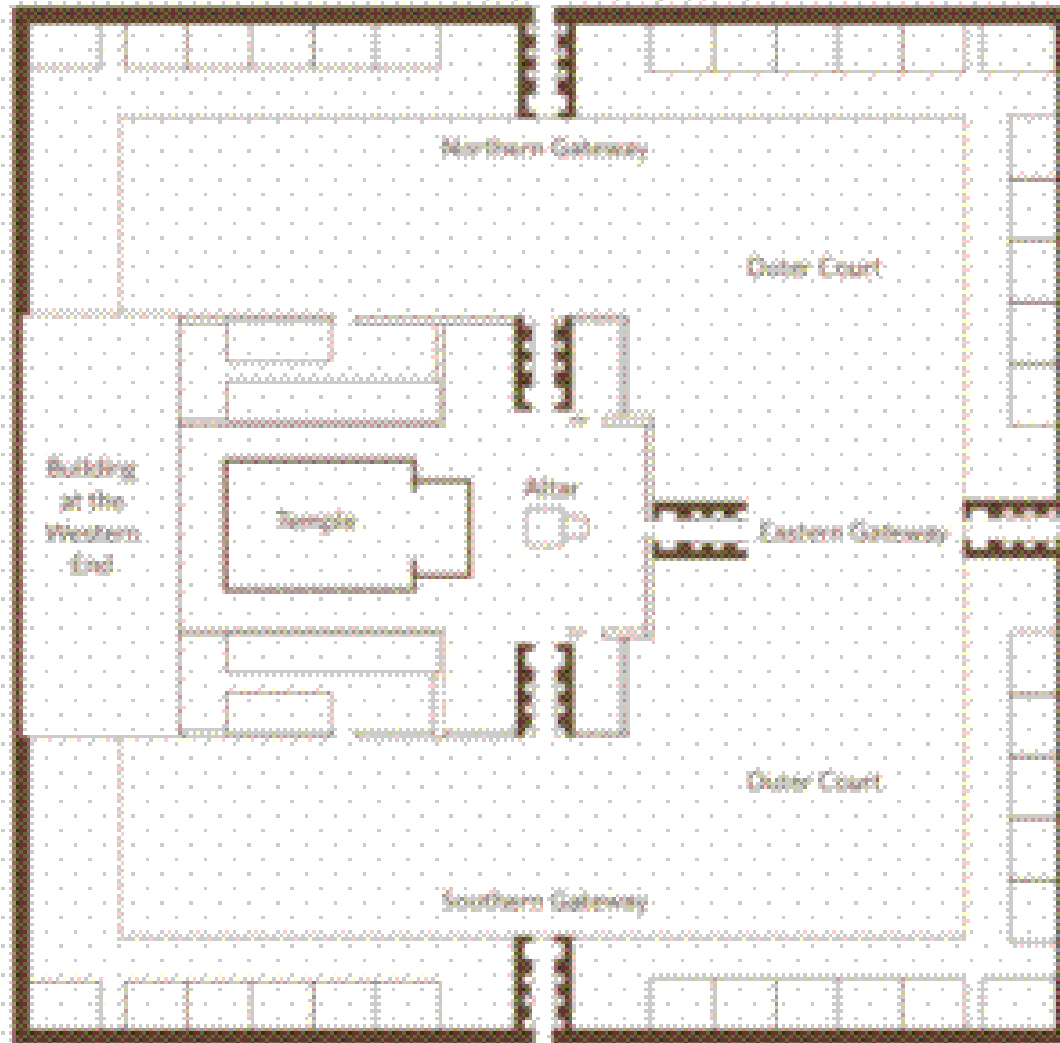
Ezekiel's Temple

The prophet Ezekiel was shown a vision of the Third Temple in 572 BC, just years after the First Temple was destroyed and before the Second Temple was built. Though the destruction of the Second Temple occurred in AD 70, a third temple has not yet been constructed.

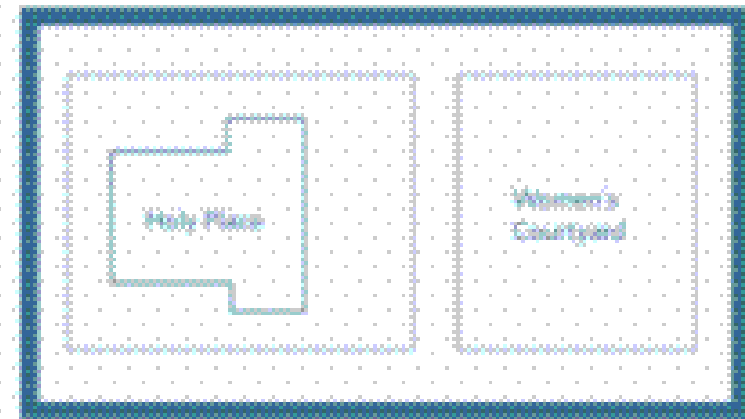


Temple Size Comparisons

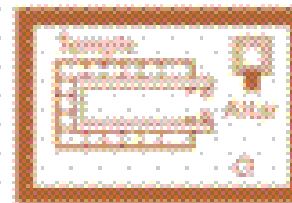
500 x 500 cubits | 1500 x 1500 ft **EZEKIEL'S TEMPLE**



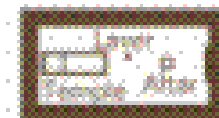
HEROD'S TEMPLE



SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

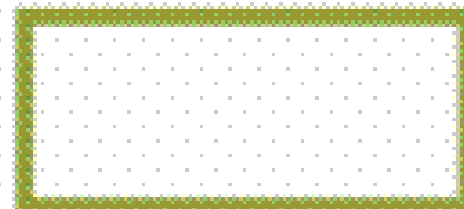


COURT OF THE TABERNACLE

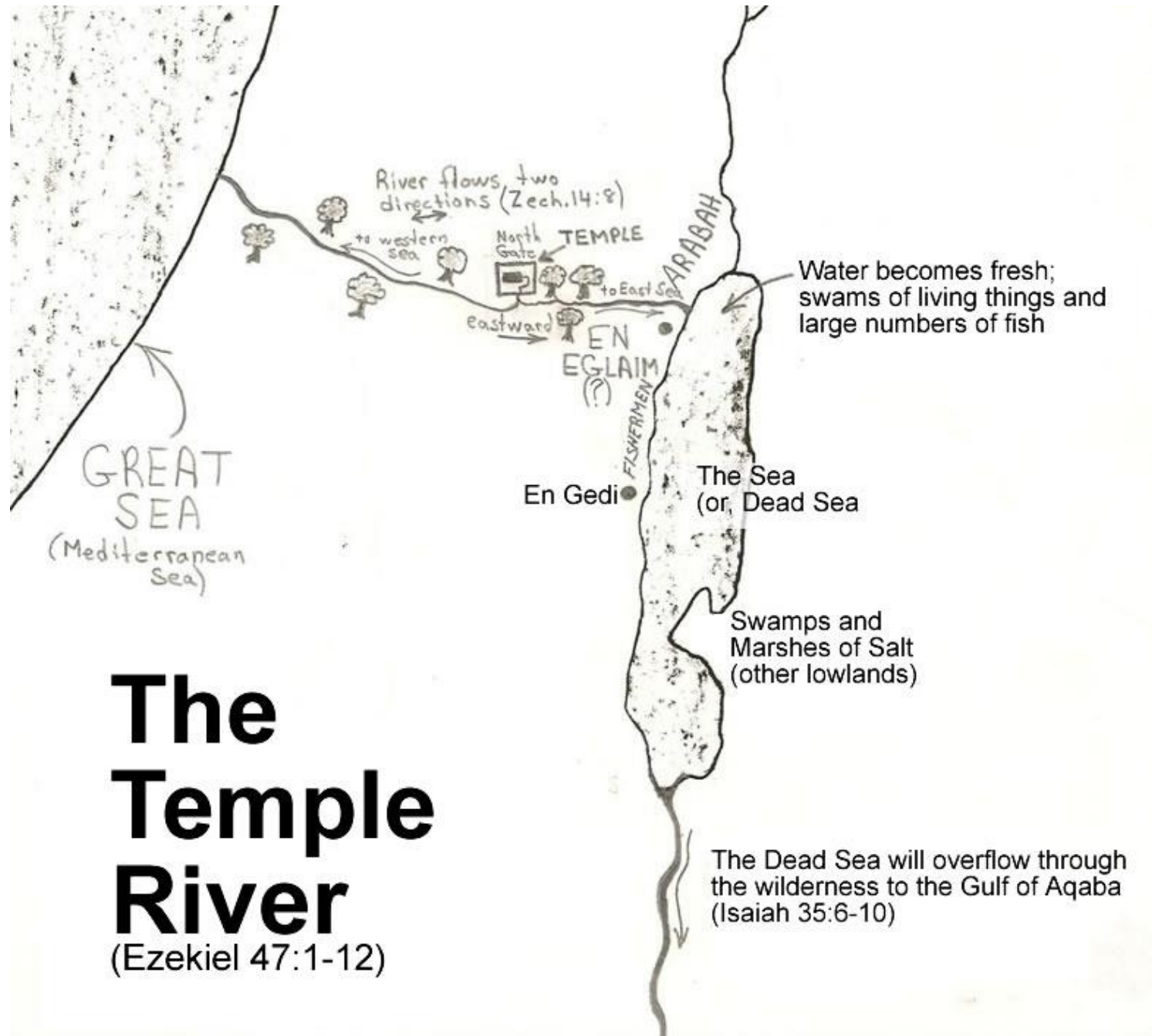


100 x 50 cubits | 150 x 75 ft

AMERICAN FOOTBALL FIELD



100 x 50 cubits | 150 x 75 ft



The Temple River

(Ezekiel 47:1-12)



Discussion

What physical place best draws you into worship? Is place or setting irrelevant to your worship or important? How much are the senses of sight and hearing involved? Smell? Taste? Touch?

Boundaries

- The vision includes a allocation of land
- A central city, with 12 gates, is identified
- The city is a new spiritual center
- The name of the city: THE LORD IS THERE
- God will have permanent presence in Israel
- With divine presence, the city, people, and temple are restored.
- There is hope for God's people





NO CLASSES UNTIL JUNE 17, 2024

- A study guide will be sent out by June 10
- Enjoy your break

Closing Hymn

[Video Link](#)

[https://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=VuCLqoxigNA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VuCLqoxigNA)



A Valley of Dry Bones

7-13 MAY 2024

EZE 19, 22, 25-26, 32-48; PS 137; OB 1-21; JER 52

Week 31

Throughout his message, Ezekiel emphasizes again and again God’s declaration that all the things that happen do so in order that the Israelites “may know that I am the Lord.” In everything that God does, whether in grace or in judgment, his aim is to reveal himself – no less today than in Ezekiel’s day. In the message from Obadiah to Edom, we are reminded that proud hearts that thrive on self-centeredness will reap the bitter fruit of judgment. No situation, nation or circumstance can be truly secure unless God is in the center of it, for justice ultimately belongs to him.

Weekly Reading Plan (pp. 836-869)

Day 1: EZE 33:21-33; 19:1-14;
EZE 22:23-31
Day 2: EZE 25:1-28:26; 32:1-32
Day 3: PS 137; OB 1-21;
JER 52:28-30
Day 4: EZE 33:1-20; 34:1-37:28
Day 5: EZE 38:1-39:29
Day 6: EZE 40:1-42:20
Day 7: EZE 43:1-48:35

Outline

The News Arrives in Babylon [Day 1]
Oracles Against Judah’s Neighbors [Day 2]
Despair and Anger [Day 3]
Obadiah’s Vision [Day 3]
Various Deportations to Babylon [Day 3]
Ezekiel’s Message of Hope [Day 4]
Ezekiel’s Apocalyptic Prophecies [Day 5]
Ezekiel’s Second Temple Vision [Day 6]
The Glory of God Returns [Day 7]

Key Characters

Ezekiel Jeremiah
Nebuchadnezzar Obadiah

Key Locations

Jerusalem Babylon
Ammon Moab
Edom Philistia
Tyre Sidon
Egypt Israel

Key Terms

Sovereign Lord Exile
Prophecy Visions
Shepherd Providence
Restored Temple

Key Verses

By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. [PS 137:1]

For the day of the LORDS is near, against all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; what you deserve will return on your own head. [OB 15]

The kingdom will be the LORD’s [OB 21]

The house of Jacob will be a fire and the house of Joseph a flame; the house of Esau will be stubble, and they will set it on fire and consume it. There will be no survivors from the house of Esau. [OB 18]

I will display my greatness and holiness, and will reveal myself in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD. [EZE 38:23]

And the name of the city from that time on will be: the Lord is there. [EZE 48:35]

EPOCH 5
(930 - 586 BC)

EPOCH 6
(586-322 BC)

Chapter Summaries (from @biblesummary)

Eze33: "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for Israel." Jerusalem was struck down. The LORD says: "I have made the land a desolation."

Eze19: "Lament for the princes of Israel: A lioness had cubs. One was taken to Egypt, another to Babylon. A vine was stripped of its fruit."

Eze22: "A city that sheds blood. In you they oppress orphans and widows. Israel has become dross to me. I will pour out my wrath upon them."

Eze25: "To the Ammonites: You jeered at Israel so I will destroy you. I will judge Moab. I will lay vengeance upon Edom and Philistia."

Eze26: "Tyre jeered at Jerusalem so I will make her a bare rock. Nebuchadnezzar will lay siege to you. I will bring you to a dreadful end."

Eze27: "Lament for Tyre: Of oaks they made your oars. Tarshish, Dedan, Judah and Damascus traded with you. Now you are wrecked by the seas."

Eze28: "To the king of Tyre: You were perfect in Eden. You became proud. I cast you to the ground. There will be no more thorns for Israel."

Eze32: "Lament for Pharaoh: You are a dragon in the seas. The sword of Babylon will come upon you. Elam and Edom are laid with the slain."

Ps137: By the rivers of Babylon, we wept when we remembered Zion. How can we sing the LORD's song? O Babylon, happy the one who repays you!

Ob1: The LORD says of Edom: "What disaster awaits you! You stood aloof when strangers entered Jerusalem. Saviors shall rule Mount Esau."

Jer52: Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem. Nebuzaradan burned the temple and took the people into exile. Evil-merodach released Jehoiachin.

Eze33: "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for Israel." Jerusalem was struck down. The LORD says: "I have made the land a desolation."

Eze34: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel! They did not feed my flock. I myself will seek my sheep. My servant David will be their shepherd."

Chapter Summaries (from @biblesummary)

Eze35: "Son of man, prophesy against Mount Seir: Because you delivered Israel to the sword, blood will pursue you. You will be desolate."

Eze36: "Prophesy to the mountains of Israel: I will make you inhabited again. I will vindicate my name. I will put my Spirit within you."

Eze37: The LORD said: "Prophesy to the bones." The bones became an army. The LORD said: "Join two sticks. I will join Ephraim and Judah."

Eze38: "Son of man, prophesy against Gog: You will come against my people. My jealousy will be roused. I will summon a sword against Gog."

Eze39: "I am against you, O Gog. I will give you a burial place in Israel. Gather the birds for a feast. Now I will have mercy on Jacob."

Eze40: In visions the LORD brought me to a temple. He brought me through the gates to the inner court. There were tables for the offerings.

Eze41: He measured the nave and the inner room. The side chambers were in three stories. In front of the Holy Place was an altar of wood.

Ezk42: He led me to the outer court. The north and south chambers are where the priests eat the offerings. He measured all the temple area.

Eze43: The glory of the LORD filled the temple. He said: "Son of man, describe the temple to Israel. The priests shall cleanse the altar."

Eze44: "No foreigner shall enter my sanctuary. The sons of Zadok shall minister to me. They shall distinguish between the holy and unholy."

Eze45: "Set apart a holy district for the LORD. The prince shall have land on each side. You shall have honest scales. Celebrate Passover."

Eze46: "The prince shall bring offerings on the Sabbaths and New Moons. You shall offer a lamb daily." In the four corners were kitchens.

Eze47: Water was flowing from the temple. He led me in until it was too deep to cross. The LORD says: "Divide the land among the tribes."

Eze48: "Set a portion for each tribe. Adjoining Judah shall be the portion for the LORD. The name of the city shall be, The LORD Is There."

Teachings About God

- All that God does on behalf of people is ultimately for the sake of his name or glory.
- God is sovereign in the affairs of all people and all nations.
- God promised to be merciful to a remnant. He would live in their midst and a Davidic king (EZE 37:24-28) would rule in righteousness (EZE 34:23-24) in keeping with covenant.
- God's justice in dealing with human sin is displayed in Obadiah.
- When God judges people and nations, he will have enough evidence to condemn based on their mistreatment of others.
- The triumph of God's kingdom is a major theme of Obadiah.

Teachings About Humanity

- In a wonderful new era of the kingdom of God, God's people would be indwelt by the Spirit and would have new hearts of obedience (EZE 36:24-27).
- The people of Edom (descended from Esau) and the people of Judah (descended from Jacob) were historical enemies. Edom joined with Babylon in Judah's downfall. Obadiah warned the Edomites of their coming doom.
- Obadiah continues the concept that there are only two kinds of people – God's covenant people and all the rest.

Teachings About Salvation

- Ezekiel's prophecies taught the Israelites God's sovereign plan over them.
- Salvation is the sovereign act of God's spirit, who breathes on people (EZE 37), giving them spiritual life and enabling them to follow God's ways.
- Salvation is thought of in terms of God's ultimate deliverance of his people (OB 17).

Reflections of Christ/Holy Spirit

- Prophecies of a coming Davidic kingdom are shown in Ezekiel 37.
- In the future, the Spirit will enable God's people to obey his laws from their heart (EZE 36:27; 39:29).
- The old treachery of Edom against Israel is seen in Herod's attempt to kill Jesus. Herod had Edomite ancestry.

Literary Genres/Techniques

- This reading of Jeremiah is Hebrew prose.
- Ezekiel's visions (EZE 40-48) is prophetic writing. Parables are poetic (EZE 26, 32).
- Obadiah is a prophecy written in Hebrew poetry.
- Obadiah is one of three prophetic books written for an initial audience outside of God's people (the other two are Jonah and Nahum).
- Obadiah 1-9 and Jeremiah 49:7-22 are similar.

Author/Date of Writing/Audience

- Ezekiel continued his prophecies for 15 years after the temple was destroyed. Ezekiel was compiled c 570 BC. In these readings he was addressing the people living in exile in Babylon.
- Obadiah written c 590 BC to the Edomite people of Mt. Seir and the Judahite people of Mt. Zion.
- The events in Obadiah occurred c 605-586 BC.

What did I learn about God?

- If God did not give Israel's neighbors biblical revelation, how do you think he made his will known? How does God communicate today? With whom does God communicate?
- What does EZE 26 do to the ancient belief that gods only have power within territorial borders? Was Yahweh "washed up" when Israel was destroyed?
- In the allegory of the sheep/shepherd in EZE 34, who are the sheep? The shepherds? What is God promising to do? Who is the coming Shepherd?
- In EZE 48, God redistributes the land. Does he distribute it evenly? Does the land all have the same economic value? When you picture God's kingdom coming to this world, do you see economic justice as a central feature? Why or why not? Should it be?

What did I learn about human nature?

- Why do you think it was wrong (EZE 35) for Edom to rejoice when God punished Israel? How do you see people behave when people "get what they deserve?" How should we react?
- In the Valley of Dry Bones story (EZE 37), Hebrews used the word "ruach" for wind, breath and spirit. How are these three related (vv. 5, 9, 14). What does it mean to be 'filled with the Spirit'? Is the description in EZE 37 any different than our New Testament understanding of the Holy Spirit?
- Christendom is has, over the years, divided into hundreds of rival groups (denominations). Do you think God approves or is concerned by these divisions? What would it take to restore the unity of all believers?
- Who are some displaced people today? What hope might Obadiah offer them? What would Obadiah say to those who encouraged their displacement?

What did I learn about my life/relationship with God?

- We read a lot of laments in this week's readings. What do you lament? What does God lament? What difference do you see between what breaks your heart and what breaks his? What can you do to be more a person "after God's own heart," even in your laments?
- Who is the Jeremiah or Ezekiel in your life who warn you when you've made a wrong turn or bad decision? Do you try to tune them out (and God) in any way?
- What do you think about the idea that God will ultimately destroy all evil? In the real world, does good always triumph over evil? Do you feel that God is in control of your life? Your country? World destiny? How much depends on human choices?
- What physical place best draws you into worship? Is place or setting irrelevant to your worship or important? How much are the senses of sight and hearing involved? Smell? Taste? Touch?