

NOVEMBER 4

Ezekiel 10-11

Ezekiel 10

Vs. 1-8 So who is this guy clothed in linen? This sounds like a normal angel, or it could be the angel of the Lord. He is the one who is ordered to execute judgment on Jerusalem by throwing out the coals. As we've seen, there are some connections here to Revelation. Revelation 8:7 sounds like this. Jerusalem was burned down by the Babylonians. In Revelation, Babylon is also suddenly consumed by fire.

Vs. 9-15 We have seen this description of the glory of God before, but there are a couple of additional details here.

V. 12 The cherubim were *full of eyes*. This is what John also saw in Revelation 4:8.

V. 13 The wheels were called *whirling wheels*.

V. 14 Instead of one of the faces being that of an ox, from chapter 1, here it is the face of a cherub. We don't know what a cherub looked like, but it couldn't have been a human face or it would have been redundant. Maybe a cherub looks a little oxy.

Vs. 15-22 The *glory of the Lord* begins to depart from the temple.

Ezekiel 11

Vs. 1-4 These are 25 other guys who are telling the people not to worry. You should have a note for v. 3 that says this is really saying, "Is not the time near to build houses?" They were telling everyone that things would be fine, deceiving the people.

Since their message was a positive lie, the idea of the cauldron and meat might have meant that those who were left in the city alive were the "best" and they would survive. If you were in the soup, wouldn't you want to be the meat and not a vegetable? Actually, you wouldn't want to be the carcass lying on the chopping board. What was cut off from the carcass "survived" in the soup.

Vs. 5-7 Those righteous witnesses whom these men had slain were really the best. These had been righteous people like Jeremiah who had been persecuted or killed for taking a stand for God.

Vs. 8-12 God's spoken judgment on these men. Notice vs. 10 and 12. We haven't seen this statement for a few chapters.

V. 13 And then suddenly it got very real. This caused Ezekiel to fall on his face again, crying out to God for the remnant. He did this in 9:8.

Vs. 14-21 As a result of Ezekiel's plea, God gives this promise. The irony here is that the people who were left in Jerusalem waved good-bye to the exiles and then said, "Good, now we'll inherit everything." Not so. The people of Jerusalem would perish, and the exiles would come home and inherit the land.

V. 18 We've seen this promise before and should understand that since this is talking about the nation of Israel, the fulfillment will not be until the Millennial Kingdom. We have come to share in the spiritual part of this blessing in our salvation in Christ, but the full blessing will not only be spiritual, but also physical, as Israel is gathered from all nations and becomes a blessing and testimony to the nations. Israel will be a nation in which Christ reigns and all nations will come to Israel.

Vs. 22-23 The *glory of the Lord* left the city and stood on the Mt. of Olives. Think about the significance of that. Jesus left from here and went to sit at the right hand of power. It is also where He will return, when He comes to rule forever.

Vs. 24-25 To me it is interesting that it seems there was a sense of motion moving from Israel back to Chaldea, that is, Babylon. Ezekiel didn't just wake up. In his vision he was flown back. I wonder what the elders thought when Ezekiel related all that he had seen and discovered.

Just for trivia, this is not the final time Ezekiel will be taken to Jerusalem. There is one more time, in chapter 40. How many years was it from this vision to that one?

Just think of our message in the harvest. We tell of the love of God and the sending of His Son. That's John 3:16, right? Now read John 3:17-21. It is the same message. We don't have the right or authority to be selective. People have to know that their decision matters, that God is not some "good ol' boy" who'll let everyone into His kingdom. *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.* (John 3:36)

Hebrews 6

Time to gird up the loins of your mind once again. The question to ask ourselves before we begin this section is, "Is it possible to harm our relationship to Christ to the point that we can never return on earth to the place of innocence and full devotion in following Him?" Paul talks about shipwrecked Christians and Christians who hurt themselves by pursuing riches and comfort. Paul weeps in Philippians 3 about Christians who are now enemies of the cross of Christ. He tells Timothy (in 2 Tim. 2:19) regarding Christians living in error that, "*The Lord knows those who are His,*" and "*Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.*" Christians can sink to a life that suggests being lost, but they are still saved, yet no one but God knows for sure. Then Paul gives Timothy the parable of the great house and the vessels for noble and disgusting use. Both sets of vessels are in the great house. If a man has fallen out of love with his wife and has given himself to someone else, is it possible for him ever to return to his wife with the same innocence, fascination and devotion? We'd all like to say, "yes," but it may never be possible. If you compare David's faith and love for God (or how he dealt with people) before and after Bathsheba and Uriah, I think you see two very different men. How we damage ourselves on earth matters. Grace is always available, but the scars and consequences of jumping in front of the truck remain.

The writer of Hebrews and the Spirit will give a warning here that if a saved person walks away from Christ and replaces Him with something else, it *may be* impossible to return to that first love and to fruitfulness.

The writer has just lamented that these believers should be teachers; but as a result of what they have been toying with, they are still babes, needing milk. Something interfered with their growth in Christ.

Vs. 1-3 All these things listed here are baby things. It would be like having to re-explain to a Christian after 10 years what it means to be saved, or having to explain to that same person that there is no benefit in praying to saints, as in the Catholic Church. The very fact that you'd have to explain these things at all suggests that something deeply wrong has happened in that person's understanding of Christ.

Vs. 4-6 This is a saved person. No dancing around the words can change the force of these words.

The idea of *restore again to repentance* seems to mean restoring a person to that conviction and thrill of being set free and forgiven in Christ. Assuming a person has fully experienced this, to cast it away as ordinary and uninteresting has the danger (and therefore the warning) that there

may not be another moment of insight that restores that sense of conviction and thrill. I think this is like David pleading with God in Psalm 51 (after Bathsheba and Uriah) to restore to him the joy of his salvation. David obviously no longer had that joy.

V. 6 To crucify Christ in Jerusalem meant to reject Him and publicly renounce Him as king. A Christian who turns away from Christ, after being known to be His follower, publicly does the same thing. This isn't just a one-time deal. It is becoming a part of a lifestyle that denies Him. Can a Christian recover? Maybe not, so why take the chance.

Vs. 7-8 Think of this illustration as a variation of 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 and the wood, hay and stubble. The person is saved, but only as through fire. The illustration here in Hebrews shows that this person becomes a fruitless believer. Remember John 15:8, *By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples.* There is also a description of fruitless believers in John 15.

Vs. 9-12 The writer still had hope for the people. Notice here that the benefits of endurance are knowing the hope of God on this earth. Only by endurance in following do we grab on to the rewards God promises. For example -

Romans 15:4 *For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*

Romans 15:13 *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*

These are actually promises, but only if we hang on to Jesus, following Him in the harvest. This is why Jesus could say, "He who endures to the end will be saved." Those who endure have already been saved eternally, but now they are saved from damage on earth. They do not shipwreck their faith.

Vs. 13-20 Abraham waited patiently on a God who swore to him, and Abe received the promise. Imagine if Abe would have given up after 20 years and not waited until the 25th year.

V. 18 Notice the call to hope and to hold fast. As we have said before about this promise or covenant, it was completely one-sided. God based the fulfilling of the promise to Abraham totally on Himself and His own character. It is an enduring, eternal, unconditional covenant. The faith or faithlessness of Abraham's children is not in question, nor is following the law. God will fulfill the promise through those who have the faith of Abraham, both in the nation of Israel, and in the Gentiles who also follow in faith. So, we hold fast.

V. 19 Notice that we have something just as sure as what Abe had, *a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul.*

V. 20 Our hope is in Jesus our Savior/Priest.

I guess the word to disciples in the harvest is, "Never, Never, Never, give up." It is interesting that when it talks about the only seed that brings forth fruit, that person is in the Word and brings forth fruit with patience. Those who remain childlike in their faith, in their fascination of being saved and in hearing God speak in His Word, will have great advantage here, in the harvest. I have to believe that if we ask and seek and knock, we will be restored and constantly renewed. It's what Jesus told His disciples to do.

Psalm 105:16-36

In terms of all of Psalm 105, what is the point of this section? If it is encouragement in remembering the past, how is it encouraging? How could this be encouraging to you?

Vs. 16-22 This summarizes God saving Israel by His sovereignty in working with Joseph. This "rags to riches" story was all about God's grace and mercy. Imagine God putting a man in power in this way. We'll see this again in Daniel. Even as Ezekiel was seeing stuff above, Daniel,

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were in key positions of political power in the Babylonian government there in the city of Babylon. These were incredibly godly men.

Vs. 23-25 Israel grew greatly in Egypt. This was also God.

Vs. 26-36 When it came time to help Israel, God sent a prepared leader in Moses, and He developed the faith of Israel, while demolishing the nation of Egypt.

The direction all of this seems to be going is that the exiles can depend on God, so they need to seek Him.

Proverbs 27:1-2

V. 27 sounds like James 4:15.

V. 28 sounds like Luke 14:9-11.

It sounds like the Lord doesn't want us to be proud and focused on ourselves.