



Sermon Series Weekly Devotionals

Week of January 21

EZEKIEL 9-12

- 1. READ** ch. 9, noticing the ominous departure of God's glory from the Most Holy Place.
- 2. REVIEW.** This section chapters 8-11 is recording one of the worst days in the history of Israel: the Shekinah glory of God is leaving his own house—the temple in Jerusalem. God is leaving because he is no longer welcome in his own home! The leaders of Israel have filled his house with abominations, and the Lord took Ezekiel on a tour of all four of them in chapter 8. Now, in this chapter, God inflicts judgment on Jerusalem.

Yahweh calls for the six executioners, and gives them their charge (“no pity!”). But the emphasis is on a seventh figure, a “man in linen” (probably an angel) with a scribe's kit assigned the job of scouring the city for signs of repentance. He is to find people who feel the same anguish as God feels at the idolatry of his beloved. Those who mourn he is to mark on the forehead with the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet (*taw*)—written like an X or a cross! Like the blood on the doorpost on the night of the Passover (Ex. 12) and the scarlet cord in Rahab's window (Josh. 2:18-21), this sign would save their life when destruction fell.
- 3. MEDITATE.** Notice that it was not enough simply to be passively innocent of evil; to receive the mark of God's favor, you must be actively righteous, mourning over evil. Jesus said in the Beatitudes, “Blessed are they who mourn,” referring to the emotion of grief we have over our own sin, as well as over the sin of those we love. Have you mourned over your own or another's sin lately?
- 4. PRAY.** Name sins that grieve God, and therefore grieve you—sins of society, sins in your extended family, your own sins. Name idols that try to supplant God in his temple withi

EZEKIEL 10

1. READ ch. 10, following the progress of the Shekinah Glory as it leaves the temple.

2. REVIEW. Mark the four steps of the departure of the Shekinah glory: (1) the Holy of Holies, 8:4; (2) the temple threshold, 9:3; 10:4; (3) the eastern gate, 10:18-19; (4) the Mount of Olives, 11:22-23. In agony, God explains, “I have abandoned my house; I have deserted my inheritance. I have handed the love of my life over to my enemies. My inheritance has behaved toward me like a lion in the wilderness. She has roared against me. Therefore, I hate her” (Jeremiah 12:7-8).

While God always stays where he is welcome (Psalm 9:10), and never leaves nor forsakes his servants (Joshua 1:5) or his helpless flock (Psalm 23:4; Isaiah 41:17), he will not stay where he is unwelcome: when his people abandon him, he abandons them (Nehemiah 9:27-28; 2 Chronicles 12:5). But his departure is not permanent (Isaiah 49:14-16), for he has tattooed us on the palm of his hand (Isaiah 49:14-16), and his anger is but for a moment, while his compassion is forever (Isaiah 54:7-8).

3. MEDITATE. Think about how God loves you. It’s so, so “human.” His love is passionate— he grows jealous when you ignore him or prefer others over him. His love turns to anger, when you abandon him. And yet, if by faith you are his bride, his love is loyal. Like the country song says: Always thought she'd give up on me one day, wash her hands of me, leave me staring down some runway; I thank God each night, and twice on Sunday, that she loves me like Jesus does.

4. PRAY. Thank the Lord for his passionate, loyal love. Tell him you love him and will walk with him all day today.

EZEKIEL 11

1. **READ** ch. 11, slowly savoring the words of hope in vv. 14-21.

2. **REVIEW.** The Jews fortunate enough to still be living back home in Jerusalem had it all wrong. They had pridefully concluded that they must be special to God, while all their countrymen now in exile were the bad eggs who God had thrown out. So they rejected their former friends, moved into their homes, and took their property. Even worse, they used the courts to steal what they wanted from the poor among them.

The Lord refutes their logic in both halves of this chapter (4-6, 16). It's just the opposite, God says. I have rejected you, but I am with the exiles in Babylon! In fact, God says, "I have become their sanctuary" far from home! [Note: it can also be translated as a promise: "I will be their sanctuary."] This is one of those remarkable statements in the whole Bible. Do you feel far from God? in the dark? barren and empty? God says, "Even if you are being chastised for your sin, and you are spiritually barren, look to me—I will be your little sanctuary!"

3. **MEDITATE.** Think about what it means for God to promise that wherever you are, whatever you are going through, he is there, ready to be your little sanctuary!

4. **PRAY.** Listen to the song "You are my refuge"
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=reWnmh-9010>) and pray its words:

I have found a place, I can call my own,
Here in your embrace, where your mercy overflows,
It's here that all my doubt and fear just melt away,
I lay my burdens down, and I look upon your face.
You are my refuge, you are my sanctuary
When I feel afraid, you're my hiding place,
You are my refuge...and when the storm is raging, underneath your wings,
I rejoice and sing, you are my refuge.

EZEKIEL 12

1. READ ch. 12, noting how many times a paragraph begins, “This is what the Sovereign Lord says,” or ends, “Then they will know that I am the Lord.”

2. REVIEW. “Can I go watch Ezekiel today?” children in exile must’ve begged moms. For in their settlement by the canal, Ezekiel provided some riveting entertainment. In this chapter, he gives onlookers not one but two dramatic pantomimes: (1) King Zedekiah packing his bag and going into exile, and (2) besieged Jerusalem Jews shaking from fear so badly that they keep spilling their food and drink.

Folks may have enjoyed Ezekiel’s dramatic plays, but behind his back most dismissed his message of judgment. Their favorite line was something like, “Time passes and the prophecies fizzle” (v. 22). Cynics have always mocked God’s future prophecies because they haven’t happened yet (Isa. 5:19)—including the Second Coming (2 Pet. 3:4). In this case, God says, “Enough. Every judgment I’ve promised will come true, and soon.”

3. MEDITATE. Do you sometimes doubt whether God’s promises are true, because they haven’t come true yet? His promises—of judgment and of blessing—often seem delayed. God’s clock is not our clock? According to 2 Peter 3:9, why is that? is God slow-moving?

4. PRAY. Ask the Lord to help you believe His word, even those promises that you most wonder about. Ask him to keep you from “cool” cynicism and “sophisticated” doubt.