

LESSON TEXT: Ezekiel 1:1---7:27

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Pearl Harbor, Hawaii! Morning, December 7, 1941! 353 Japanese airplanes swarming all over the skies of the harbor! Within a couple of hours, America lost 8 big battleships, 6 major airfields, almost all planes and 2400 military personnel. That happened at 7:50 a.m. in what was supposedly a surprise attack. Numerous books have recently been published to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the very highest ranking people in the U.S. government in Washington, D.C. knew in advance when and where the attack would come. Here is just one startling fact--that morning at 7 a.m., while the Japanese warplanes were 137 miles (50 minutes) away, two U.S. soldiers on a small radar station scanned the screen and saw dots and more dots appearing, until the whole screen was filled. These soldiers notified their youthful supervisor, a lieutenant. No other officer was around, that being Sunday. The lieutenant thought these must be planes from California, and without another thought, said these crucial words: "Don't worry about it." And there would have been time to scramble the planes at Pearl Harbor, prepare the battleships and shelter many of the men, but this lieutenant, at the most responsible moment of his career said, "Don't worry about it."

Ezekiel was called by God to be the WATCHMAN for God's people in his day. Ezekiel was told, "...whenever you hear a word from my (God's) mouth, you shall give them warning from me...If you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his way...that wicked man shall die...but his blood I will require at your hand."

Every Christian is a "WATCHMAN" for God! Have you warned anyone? Is there someone you ought to warn? Be sure to study these first 7 chapters of Ezekiel and then come to Bible School for encouragement and help that you may be a faithful **watchman** for God.

**"Watch therefore...lest he come suddenly and find you asleep...And what I say to you I say to all: Watch!"—Jesus Christ, Mk. 13:35**

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did God give Ezekiel such a vision as he saw in chapter 1? What message do you get from this vision? Is there one intended for you there? (Compare this vision with the ones in Isaiah 6, Daniel 7, Revelation 1,4,5)
2. These people would not listen to God's word--why send Ezekiel to such an impossible field of service? 2:1---3:11. Would you be satisfied with a people like this to talk to about God?
3. What did God mean for Ezekiel to do when he commanded him to eat the scroll given to him 2:9---3:3? Should we eat Christ's word? (See John 6:35-63).
4. How can God hold one man responsible for another man's failure to heed divine warnings? 3:17-18? (See Acts 18:6; 20:26).
5. What was the vegetable bread for--and why cook it over an unclean fire 4:9-17? Does God want us to feel dirty when we sin against him?
6. Why had God set Jerusalem in the center of the nations 5:5-6? (See Deut. 4:5-8). Is there a lesson for Christians here?
7. You shall know that I am the Lord occurs over 60 times in Ezekiel! Start making a list of the different ways God made himself known (see 5:13).
8. Why would the citizens of Jerusalem cast their silver and gold into the streets 7:19-23?
9. Would the Lord ever treat his church like he did Jerusalem? (See Rev. chs. 2-3).

When Pompeii was destroyed by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius there were many persons buried in the ruins who were afterward found in very different positions. There were some found in deep vaults as if they had gone there for security. There were some found in lofty chambers. But where did they find the Roman sentinel? They found him standing at the city gate where he had been placed by the captain, with his hands still grasping the weapon. There, while the earth shook beneath him; there, while the flood of ashes and cinders over-whelmed him, he had stood at his post; and there, after a thousand years, he was found. **So let Christians stand by their duty in the post at which their Captain places them, TO WATCH!**

LESSON TEXT: Ezekiel 8:1---15:8

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

A large segment of the American population is as surely **idolatrous** as the millions of Indian and Asia! Thousands of Americans daily worship at the altars of money, sex, rock music and scores of other sacred cows.

Some years ago, the worshipers of rock and pot invaded the heartland of Midwest America on Labor Day weekend, 1970. Between 20-25,000 came to a wheat field near Pittsburg, Kansas. They came in a state of unconventional dress, nakedness and inebriation to attend what was billed as a rock-music festival. It turned out to be a wild orgy of promiscuous sex and narcotics. They were not a bunch of innocent youth, but rather the worst elements of adult society. Among them were hard-core revolutionaries. The American flag was desecrated. They waded in their own wallow and filth. The sale and use of narcotics was wide open. It was the biggest pot-party and sex-orgy the Midwest has ever seen. Forty people were arrested, charged with carrying concealed weapons, possessing drugs or liquor, and driving while intoxicated. There was a display of nudity, and mixed nude swimming parties in a local creek, and public sexual intercourse. With no sanitation facilities and failure to comply with health regulations, one can imagine what the place was like. The former Kansas Governor and Presidential candidate, Alf Landon said: "They call these things festivals, but I have another name for them--feasts of hell."

All this was the consequence of decades of false prophets **idolizing and teaching** evolution, humanism and rebellion against the God of the Bible in American educational systems. It differs not one iota from the depraved society of Ezekiel's day as we read about it in chapters 8-15. The cure is the very same one preached by Ezekiel--fear of God's judgment and faith in the mercy and grace of God upon repentance.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is an image of jealousy? (see 1 Kings 15:13; 2 Kings 21:7; 23:4,7; Jer. 7:18; 17:19; Deut. 32:16-21; Ex. 20:3-5). Who was Tammuz? Could such idolatry occur in a Christian church (see 1 Cor. 10:14; Rev. 2:14,20).
2. Why would there be violence just because the people were following other religions 8:17? Shouldn't God allow freedom of religion?
3. Which people did God single out for a mark on their forehead 9:4? What was that mark? Does God mark people now? How? Rev. 7:3; 14:1; 22:4; Eph. 1:13-14.
4. Why were the Israelites saying the Lord had forsaken the land 9:9?
5. What is the point of the vision of chapter 10?
6. What sanctuary did the Lord provide for the Jews in exile among the countries where he scattered them? 11:14-20.
7. What does the people's attitude toward Ezekiel's preaching (12:21ff) tell us about their concept of God?
8. Why do false prophets prophesy 13:18? See also 2 Pet. 2:1ff.
9. Why bring up Noah, Daniel and Job 14:4,16,18,20? --four times!
10. Are unbelievers really useless to God, 15:1-8?

**The men who built the Pyramids worshiped loathsome insects and animals. The Phoenicians, who invented letters, chained the images of their gods to their altars, that their gods might not abandon them. The cultured men of Rome made important plans by predictions derived from the entrails of sheep or the flight of birds. Plutarch, the Greek thought that the souls of men were made out of the moon, and would return to it. Plato and Seneca thought the stars required nourishment, and were eager for pasture. East Indian Hindus have 330 million gods and goddesses--8 for every Hindu family. In Thailand there are 20,000 Buddhist temples. Millions of human beings all over the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century worship "Chance" as the Creator of the cosmos.**

Montaigne, who lived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, wrote, "Man is certainly crazy. He could not make a mite, and he makes gods by the dozen."

LESSON TEXT: Ezekiel 16:1—24:27

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

In the 1930's a German woman entered the maternity ward of a hospital. She saw a picture of Christ in the room, and asked the nurse to take it down. "I have no authority to take it down," said the nurse. "Then see your superiors, and have it removed as soon as possible," replied the woman. The superiors in the hospital said, likewise, that they had no authority to take it down. "My husband is an army officer, and when he comes in a few days, I will get him to see to it that it is taken down," promised the woman. A few days passed and the husband arrived. The woman told her husband to have the picture taken down. He started to interview one of the authorities, and said, "My wife and I do not want our boy (they were hoping for a boy) ever to look upon the picture of that Jew!" And even while he was still speaking, word arrived that a baby boy had just been born to the parents--but, he was born blind, hopelessly blind. No! He "never would look upon the picture of that Jew!" The judgments of Almighty God are just! They give rebellious and impenitent people what their hearts really, honestly, secretly desire!

Closing words of the Bible (Rev. 22:11) proves this: "Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy." (Rev. 22:11). Those idolatrous, wicked people marked by the beast (the ancient Roman empire A.D. 100-450) and those persecuted, righteous saints with God's mark upon their forehead were allowed to go on doing as they wished--and God rewarded each according to his "mark"!

Our lesson for Ezekiel 16-24 is about the **judgments of God**. Most of the Jews of Ezekiel's day wanted idolatry, immorality, and heathenism. God gave it to them--in full--in exile in Babylon! There was, however, a faithful remnant--and God rewarded them with release and restoration in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah.

"If a man does not repent, God will whet his sword; he has bent and strung his bow; he has prepared his deadly weapons, making his arrows fiery shafts." --Psa. 7:12-13

QUESTIONS:

1. Why the graphic portrayal of Judah as a sexually depraved wife 16:1-63? Could this happen to the church of Christ? (See Rev. chs. 2-3).
2. Who is the young tender twig of 17:22-24?
3. What did the people of God mean by their sour-grapes-saying 18:2? (See Jer. 31:29-30; Lam. 5:7). Are people still spouting sour grapes today?
4. Why is God so obsessed for the sake of his name 20:9,14,22,44? What will God accomplish by acting for the sake of his name 20:32-33?
5. When God pours out judgment on sinful mankind, why does he allow the righteous to suffer along with the wicked 21:3-4?
6. Why was it necessary to specify sins so plainly as Ezekiel did in chapter 22? Is it necessary in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?
7. Why did the two sisters turn from their paramours in disgust 23:17,22? Why did their loves turn against the two sisters?
8. Why would taking the temple from these Jews be as devastating to them as Ezekiel losing his wife in death 24:15-27? Why were they not to mourn over this loss?

The knowledge that the entire membership roll of the Nazi Party, containing some 8,000,000 names, was found in 1945 soon after the collapse of the German Third Reich. It was no joyous news to those whose names were thereon. Once, these people were proud to be numbered with the ruling party. Once, it had meant power and prestige, and in many cases wealth. This master file had been the key to places of honor and authority for those whose names were listed, but now it was different.

**Now it meant sharp investigation,  
prison for many and death for others.**

LESSON TEXT: Ezekiel 25:1--32-32

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

At the funeral of Louis XIV of France, the great cathedral was packed with mourners paying final tribute to the king whom they all considered great. The room was dark, save for one lone candle which illumined the great solid casket that held the mortal remains of the monarch. At the appointed time, Massillon, court preacher, stood to address the assembled elite of France. As he rose, he reached from the pulpit and snuffed out the one candle which had been put there to symbolize the greatness of the king. Then from the darkness came just four words—"GOD ONLY IS GREAT!"

At the American Constitutional Convention, 1787 in Philadelphia, imploring the delegates to pray for God's providential guidance, Benjamin Franklin said, "I have lived, Sirs, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth: that God governs in the affairs of man. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid?"

George Washington, at his first inauguration, said: "It would be peculiarly improper to omit, in this first official act, my fervent supplication to that Almighty Being, who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that his benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States."

God rules over nations! No king, president, or premiere ever rules without God's permission. Every human ruler and every nation of mankind is responsible to the God of the Bible, whether they admit it or not! God sets up nations and brings down nations. That is the declaration of Ezekiel, chapters 25-32 (see also Dan. 2:21; Jer. 27:4-7). That is our lesson--be in Bible School and learn the **real secret of history**.

"It is impossible to enslave mentally or socially a Bible-reading people. The principles of the Bible are the ground-work of human freedom"—Horace Greeley

QUESTIONS:

1. Why were Judah's heathen neighbor-nations glad about Judah's exile, 25:3,6,8,15? Does the world today enjoy tribulations which come upon the Lord's church?
2. What does God think about hostility toward his people? Why?
3. What value is the prophecy of Tyre's destruction to you and me in the 21<sup>st</sup> century 26:1-21?
4. What made the king of Tyre so arrogant 28:1-10? Have any modern rulers ever displayed such arrogance? What happened to them?
5. Why did God declare judgment upon Egypt 29:3,6,9? Has this come true?
6. How does God (what instrumentalities) work to bring about his judgments?
7. How long has Egypt been without a prince? 30:13
8. Where is Sheol? Why does God give us this glimpse of Egypt in Sheol? Who else is there? 32:1-32
9. Does God still deal with nations and rulers today as he did then? What makes you think so?
10. When will God deal with those who presently blaspheme him and defy his revealed word?

On the morning of Abraham Lincoln's death, a crowd of 50,000 people gathered before the Exchange Building in New York. Feelings ran high, natural enough in the circumstances, and there was danger of its finding expression in violence. Then a well-built man in officer's uniform stepped to the front of the balcony, and in a voice that rang like a trumpet call, cried: "Fellow citizens! Clouds and darkness are round about him. His pavilion is dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies. Justice and judgment are the establishment of his throne. Mercy and truth go before his face. Fellow citizens! God reigns! And the Government at Washington still lives!" Instantly the tumult was stilled, as the people grasped the import of those sublime words. The speaker was General James A Garfield, Christian preacher and educator, himself to become a martyred-president 16 years later.

**GOD STILL REIGNS AND RULES OUR UNIVERSE!**

LESSON TEXT: Ezekiel 33:1---39:29

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

A man named Brown was hanged in Philadelphia years ago. In 10 minutes after he was legally dead he was resting on a table in the physiological laboratory. Around the table were three of the most famous physiologists of the scientific world. Could motion and life be restored to that inanimate body? Science waited anxiously for an answer to the question. A sharp wire charged with electricity was applied to the various nerve centers of the body and brain. Brown raised first his right hand and then his left. His head moved. His mouth twitched in a convulsive grin. The cords of his neck swelled and the mouth opened as if he would complete his unfinished sentence on the scaffold. The hands drew up and then extended. Unceasingly the electric wire prodded center after center in the nervous organism. At a fresh touch from the needle the body sat upright. There seemed to be breath, for the respiratory organs were agitated. Would he walk? Would he talk? Science was anxious; another stroke and it had found the secret of life. But placed on the floor, the body fell over limp--dead. Science had demonstrated wonders, but failed to raise the dead.

The Jews of Ezekiel's day believed their glorious messianic hope was dead (Ezek. 37:11)! They believed their nation and their destiny had been extinguished in the Babylonian captivity. It appeared to them as if their enemies had proved their God to be impotent--God's enemies had become victorious. BUT WAIT! Ezekiel predicts that God will **resurrect** his messianic people and their destiny (Ezek. 37:12-28)! God will win the ultimate **victory** over his enemies (Ezek. 38:1---39:29). YES! Jehovah-God is able to bring life from death! And he will! He does not fail! History proves it! BE IN BIBLE SCHOOL FOR EZEKIEL'S VICTORY MESSAGE!

When we ask God to do something *for* us, he generally wants to do something ***in*** us and ***through*** us! --ptb

QUESTIONS:

1. Why, at this point, does God repeat the warning about Ezekiel's responsibility and each person's responsibility for his actions? 33:1-29
2. What attitudes were the Jews taking toward Ezekiel's preaching? 33:30-33.
3. Who is the shepherd (or the David) Ezekiel is predicting? 34:20-31; 37:24-28. See John 10:1-30; Micah 5:2-4; Isaiah 40:1-11.
4. When did God "sprinkle" Israel and give them a new heart and new spirit? 36:25. See also Ezek. 37:14; Zech 12:10---13:9.
5. What is the vision of the valley of dry bones all about? 37:1-14.
6. When is the prophecy of the two sticks fulfilled? 37:15-28. Is its fulfillment important to our lives?
7. Considering the overall context of this section, who are Gog and Magog? 38:1-6; 38:17. See Joel 2:28---3:21; Isa. 34:1ff; Zech. 14:1ff.
8. What is the goal of Gog and Magog? 38:10-16.
9. What will God do to Gog and Magog? 39:1-20.
10. What will be the result of this great victory of God? 39:21-29

**On a certain Christian festival the ancient Roman emperor Theodosius (A.D. 378-395) opened all the prisons and released the prisoners. He is reported to have said at the time, "And now would to God I could open all the tombs and give life to the dead."**

**As a young man, Dwight L. Moody was called upon suddenly to preach a funeral sermon. He hunted all through the Four Gospels trying to find one of Christ's funeral sermons, but searched in vain. He found that Christ broke up every funeral he ever attended. Death could not exist where he was. When the dead heard his voice they sprang to life. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection, and the life." John 11:26**

LESSON TEXT: Ezekiel 40:1---48:35

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

In 1970 it was estimated that all churches in the U.S. had over \$100,000,000,000 (that's 100 billion dollars!) invested in real estate, most in Church and Sunday School buildings. That represented about 80% of total resources of religious bodies in this country. America's nearly 500,000 churches showed a facility-utilization rate of about 2%. This means the average church made full use of its facilities about 32 hours for every 168 hours in the week. No other architectural structures were used so sparingly!

A minister riding a streetcar in New York, years ago, passing a beautiful church building, sat next to a man who said, "If these Christians would stop building fine churches and give their money to the poor, it would be much more to their credit." "I've heard of a similar remark before," was the minister's quiet reply. "By whom?" said the critic. "By Judas Iscariot!" came the minister's subtle reply.

God allowed his chosen people in ancient times to build an ornate temple in which they might congregate and glorify his name. But no building, however ornate, can ever be the residence of God. He does not dwell in temples made by human hands (Acts 7:47-50; 17:24; Isa. 66:1; John 4:20-21, etc.). God's dwelling place has always, in reality, been in **people** (Psa. 52:10-23; Isa. 66:2; 63:11; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21-22; 1 Pet. 2:5).

Of course, adequate buildings in which members of Christ's church may come together for efficiency in teaching God's word, and to commune together in worship, fulfill a definite, practical need. God approves of them. Christ and the apostles utilized the temple, synagogues, school buildings, and private homes for such purposes. But our lesson on Ezekiel's *visionary* temple (Ezek. ch. 40-48) is **not really about a physical building at all!** It is about the *first* coming of Christ and the holy temple--a dwelling place of God in the Spirit which is the NT church. Ezekiel's symbolic picture emphasizes the grandeur and holiness of the Messianic Age because of the centrality of God's ruling presence guiding and sustaining his NT people. BE IN BIBLE SCHOOL AND SOAK IT IN!

QUESTIONS:

1. When was Ezekiel's visionary temple built? How do you know? Ch. 40.
2. What is the point of showing Israel all these minute details? Ch. 41
3. How large is the temple area? 42:15-20. Why the measurements?
4. Why was Ezekiel told to wait to portray the temple until Israel was ashamed? 43:11.
5. Why all the fuss about admission to the sanctuary? 44:5ff.
6. Where is the holy portion located? 45:1-5. Why there?
7. What is the behavior of the prince typifying in chapter 46?
8. What does the river symbolize? 47:1-12.
9. How could it be possible in an OT dispensation for aliens to receive an inheritance in Israel? 47:21-23.
10. What is the significance of the name of the city in 48:35?

**"Decor: Discomfort."** That was a headline in an article in a 1970s *Time Magazine* regarding architect Wenzler of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and his concept of church architecture. His new idea was meant to combat "complacency, smugness, comfort, and escape from reality." His plans were, "no soft lights, no lush no carpeting, no cushioned pews, or padded kneelers." Said Wenzler: "The Church of today must be prodded, worried, concerned, disturbed."

Seen on a church sign-board: "You aren't too bad to come in. You aren't too good to stay out."

**"God's temple is holy, and that temple you are!" 1 Cor. 3:17**

The commander and lead pilot of the Japanese planes that attacked Pearl Harbor, on December 7, 1941, was Mitsuo Fuchida. Years later, reasoning from "nature" to a Creator-Designer, and reading a Japanese language Bible he became a Christian and converted hundreds of his fellow countrymen to Christ  
see the book, *God's Samurai*, by Gordon W. Prange