

EZEKIEL - A TEACHER'S GUIDE

THE CENTRAL QUESTION:

What does this book/story say to us about God?

This question may be broken down further as follows:

- a. Why did God do it/allow it?
- b. Why did He record it for our study?

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1. When someone mentions the book of Ezekiel, what comes to your mind? Sometimes its name is used to refer to things which are very mysterious. Did you find it complicated? What was Ezekiel doing and where was he when he wrote this book? What is the main message of the book? What about the “wheels within the wheels?” (Ezekiel 1:15-21; 10:6-13) Was it inspiring? Did you learn anything new in this book?

“AUTHOR: Ezekiel

“Ezekiel’ means “God strengthens.” It is an appropriate name for the man who was to minister as the prophet to the exiles in Babylon. He was a priest (1:3) from a priestly family. Buzi, his father, was of the Zadokite priesthood (44:15; 1 Kin. 1:32). Ezekiel was preparing for service in the temple at Jerusalem, though he never had the privilege of serving there. Temple priests were consecrated at the age of thirty, but Ezekiel was taken captive along with Jehoiachin at the age of twenty-five in 597 B.C. His prophetic ministry began five years later in 593 B.C. (1:2) and continued for at least twenty-two years (29:17). Ezekiel was married and maintained a household, though no children are mentioned. In the midst of his ministry, his wife died (24:15–27).

“The Book of Ezekiel is autobiographical throughout, and its arrangement is a continuous, logical one. The uniformity of style and language, including the many characteristic phrases used throughout the book, e.g., “as I live, says the Lord” (5:11; 14:16, 18, 20; 16:48; 17:16; 18:3; 20:3; 33:11; 34:8; 35:6, 11), argues for a single author. The Book of Ezekiel is one of many of the biblical books which comprise the genre of “apocalyptic” writings. Other notable books of this genre are Daniel and Revelation. The characteristics of this genre include symbolism, visions, allegories, parables, and symbolic actions. **The apocalyptic style in the Bible may be more a matter of telling what happened than the conscious employment of a literary device.**” (*Believer’s Study Bible*)

There were five priest-prophets in the Old Testament. The others were Moses, Jeremiah, Zechariah, and Ezra. Ezekiel emphasized the concerns of a priest: the glory of the Lord, priestly duties, and both the present and future temples.

“DATE: 593–571 B.C.

“This book is the easiest of the Old Testament books to date, because of Ezekiel’s unique orderly sequence of dates. Each section of prophetic oracles begins with the year and day of the month. All but 26:1 and 32:17 also include the month (cf. 1:1, 2; 8:1; 20:1; 24:1; 26:1; 29:1, 17; 30:20; 31:1, 17; 33:21; 40:1). Ezekiel’s ministry began in July, 593 B.C., and continued at least until the last recorded oracle (29:17ff.), which is dated April, 571 B.C. He was a contemporary of both Jeremiah and Daniel, and three of his prophecies seem to be extensions of Jeremiah’s message: (1) the vision of the caldron (11:1–12; 24:3–14; cf. Jer. 1:13–15), (2) the example of the sour grapes (18:2–32; cf. Jer. 31:29, 30), and (3) the parable of the two sisters (23:1–49; cf. Jer. 3:6–11).

“THEME: God’s Holiness and Glory

“Ezekiel’s purpose is to declare the holy character of God and to extol His glory. Isaiah is the prophet of the Son; Jeremiah, the prophet of the Father; Ezekiel, the prophet of the Spirit. His

message is much like that of John in the Book of Revelation, full of imagery and symbolism. **Ezekiel also declared the position of Israel as a nation (20:9, 14, 22), indicating that YAHWEH had become the God of Israel historically in order to reveal Himself to the nations. He well understood the Hebrew people's devotion to the Land of Promise. They believed that to leave the land was to leave the arena of God's influence. Another prominent theme in Ezekiel is the responsibility of the individual before God, as a balance to the Jewish idea of the corporate responsibility of the covenant community. This concept of corporate responsibility mistakenly led them to conclude that their punishment was the result of the sins of their ancestors (18:1–32; 33:10–20). Finally, Ezekiel presented his messianic prophecy describing the kingdom of God in its millennial glory (40:1–48:35)."** (*Believer's Study Bible*)

The book of Ezekiel is named after its author, in Hebrew *Yechezque'l*, meaning "whom God will strengthen." Both Jeremiah and Daniel were contemporaries of Ezekiel. Jeremiah began his work much earlier, but remained in Jerusalem to chronicle the final events of that city before it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. Daniel was taken captive with the first group of exiles to leave Jerusalem, but remained active as a prophet until after the rise of the Medo-Persian Empire in 539 BC. Ezekiel's prophetic work took place between 593 and 571 BC. Ezekiel was among the captives taken from Jerusalem in the second conquest of Jerusalem in 597/596 BC. He received his visions and did his work near the Chebar (Kabar) River in Babylonia, most likely a canal now known as *Naru Kabari* in the Nippur area, about 50 miles southeast of Babylon near the Euphrates river. Tel Abib (See Ezekiel 3:15) probably comes from the Akkadian language *Til Abubi* and means "mound of the storm flood." There are many such mounds in the Nippur area which are believed by some to be left over from Noah's flood. It is likely that the book begins when Ezekiel was 30 years old (See 1:1), the age at which a Jewish male is considered mature and the age at which priests are allowed to begin their work. It was also the age at which Jesus and John the Baptist began their ministries. (See Matthew 3:1 and Luke 3:23)

The name of Ezekiel is often associate with complicated mysteries because of the "wheels within the wheels." (See Ezekiel 1 and 10) This prophecy seems to be directed primarily at the Jewish exiles in Babylon who had begun to think—as the heathen were suggesting—that Yahweh could no longer care for His people. It was the common belief in those days that the "god" of a "winning" nation had proven himself more powerful than the "god" of the "losing" nation! This made Yahweh, who had now allowed both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah to go into exile, look like a helpless "god." The time had come as suggested by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel for God to do something to rescue His reputation! (See ***Deuteronomy Teacher's Guide* #4; *Joshua Teacher's Guide* #11; *Job Teacher's Guide* #14; *2 Chronicles Teacher's Guide* #6; *Psalms Teacher's Guide* #12; *Isaiah Teacher's Guide* #6; *Jonah Teacher's Guide* #2 and #16; *Daniel Teacher's Guide* #10; *Habakkuk Teacher's Guide* #3; Ezekiel 20:9,14,22,44; 36:22; Jeremiah 14:7,21; 15:15)**

2. What do you think was the general conception of the Old Testament God, Yahweh, in Ezekiel's time? Was the picture different in Jerusalem (where Jeremiah was) than it was beside the Chebar (Kabar) River (in captivity) where Ezekiel was; in Babylon (where Daniel was); throughout the universe? (among the angels) Do you think these visions were calculated to inspire reverence and respect? (especially Ezekiel 1)

Those who really believed that Yahweh was the only true God were wondering why He didn't do something, while those who weren't so sure were beginning to believe that Yahweh no longer had any power. Under those circumstances it was necessary for God to give a vision of such power and

glory just to let Ezekiel, at least, know that He was still in control of the universe and even was able to demonstrate His power here on planet earth.

The heathen felt that the defeats and captivities of Israel and Judah proved that their once-powerful God could no longer do anything for them. In Jerusalem, the leaders apparently had come to the place where they felt that Yahweh wasn't even aware of what was going on in His own temple! (Ezekiel 8) And when Habakkuk asked God what was coming, even God said it would be a total surprise! (See Habakkuk 1,2) The exiles in Babylonia apparently felt that God had abandoned them. God was getting some notice in Babylon because of the faithfulness of Daniel and his friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

The universe must have been very impatiently waiting for God to do something. [Revelation 6:10; See Ellen White Quotes below: *Review and Herald*, July 17, 1900; (4RH 201:1:4-201:2:1)]

3. Why would Ezekiel have to use words like "such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord?" (Ezekiel 1:28, *KJV, RSV, NIV*) Is not this the way John spoke in trying to describe his visions in Revelation? Did New Testament writers ever use such words, or was this just a problem for ancient prophets with a limited vocabulary?

If Ezekiel saw even a small portion of the glory of God's throne, no human language could possibly adequately describe it. Even in our day, language is built up by describing things, scenes, ideas, etc. that people are familiar with. So when describing something like God's presence or His glory or His throne, human language must surely be inadequate. Many Bible writers seem to describe God's glory as "fire." (Exodus 24:17; Deuteronomy 4:24; Isaiah 33:10-17; Daniel 7:9,10; Hebrews 12:29) It was no doubt the best word that they could think of!

New Testament writers used a language that was a bit richer in vocabulary than the ancient Hebrew, but they still described God's glory as fire. (Hebrews 12:29) Even the last writer of the New Testament, John, struggled with language to describe what he apparently saw in vision as portrayed in the book of Revelation. (See Revelation 4:3)

4. Do you understand every detail in the vision of Ezekiel 1:4-28? (see also 8:2-4; 10:1-22) What effect did it have on Ezekiel? Do you think he understood it all? What do you think he actually saw? Would it help us, in this modern age, if the Lord would appear and give us some glimpse of His infinite power and majesty? How would we walk into church and how would we worship if the "appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord" was up at the front of the sanctuary? Were the Jews accustomed to having revelations of God's power? How could the pillar of fire (the Shekinah) become commonplace to the Jews? (See Exodus 13:21,22) How could they complain about the manna, and the water while God's power was so apparent nearby? (Exodus 16:1-36; Numbers 11:4-34; Numbers 21:4-9) Would you dare to build a golden calf at the foot of the mountain with God's power still visible at the top? (Exodus 32:1-35; Deuteronomy 9:6-29) Would not this vision give the prophet a feeling that God was with him, when he had to deliver an often unpopular message? Was this God the Father or God the Son, whom Ezekiel saw? (see Exodus 24:17; 1 Corinthians 10:4) What of the garden of Eden before the flood? (Patriarchs and Prophets 62.2; 83.2; AH 539.1; AG 360.2; Mar 354.1) Did seeing it impress the antediluvians?

This vision was apparently given to convince Ezekiel and all who would listen that God was still alive, active, and, in fact, in control of the universe. Human beings seem to be very susceptible to miraculous or supernatural power. It is often suggested that if we could just have more miracles and power, the gospel would be quickly finished. The story of Elijah at Mt. Horeb (Sinai) should make us think twice about such notions. (See 1 Kings 19:9-14)

But history also shows us that the effect of miracle and power is short-lived. People become accustomed to seeing virtually anything, and after a short period of time they tend to go about their daily lives as if it were nothing! Imagine building a golden calf at the bottom of Mt. Sinai while God's very presence and glory was clearly visible only a short distance away! (Exodus 32) Shows of power may help to get people's attention temporarily, but we should never depend on them to make a lasting change in people's behavior. Only if we see and learn something that really impacts us after God gets our attention will it ultimately make a difference in our lives.

5. What is Ezekiel (and God) trying to say to us in Ezekiel 20? What about Ezekiel 36? Do you have a simple explanation for Ezekiel 20:25,26; compare Isaiah 45:7? Or does it require an approach developed by working your way through many such passages? Does reading the rest of the chapter help?

Ezekiel 20 and 36 are very instructive chapters. They should be read carefully and the implications considered. Please note this particular theme:

In Egypt: Read verses four through seven about how God tried to help Israel in Egypt, then note:

⁸ "But they defied me and refused to listen. They did not throw away their disgusting idols or give up the Egyptian gods. I was ready to let them feel the full force of my anger there in Egypt. ⁹ But I did not, since **that would have brought dishonor to my name**, for in the presence of the people among whom they were living I had announced to Israel that I was going to lead them out of Egypt...

In the wilderness: Read verses 10-12, then note:

¹³ "But even in the desert they defied me. They broke my laws and rejected my commands, which bring life to anyone who obeys them. They completely profaned the Sabbath. I was ready to let them feel the force of my anger there in the desert and to destroy them. ¹⁴ But I did not, since **that would have brought dishonor to my name among the nations which had seen me lead Israel out of Egypt...** (See Exodus 32:7-14)

The second generation in the wilderness: Read verses 15-20, then note:

²¹ "But that generation also defied me. They broke my laws and did not keep my commands, which bring life to anyone who obeys them. They profaned the Sabbath. I was ready to let them feel the force of my anger there in the desert and to kill them all. ²² But I did not, **since that would have brought dishonor to my name among the nations which had seen me bring Israel out of Egypt...**

After the Babylonian captivity: Read verses 37-42, then note:

⁴³ "Then you will remember all the disgraceful things you did and how you defiled yourselves. You will be disgusted with yourselves because of all the evil things you did. ⁴⁴ **When I act to protect my honor, you Israelites will know that I am the LORD**, because I do not deal with you as your wicked, evil actions deserve.' The Sovereign LORD has spoken." (GNB)

Right throughout Israelite history God has had to act, not primarily for the "salvation" of His people but for the honor of His own name! The great controversy is not about how God saves you and me but about how God answers Satan's accusations and human misconceptions about His character and government.

Note especially that the purpose of the Sabbath is to remind us of this particular very important truth. The Sabbath is to be a time when we get to know our God and are reminded of our relationship with Him. (Ezekiel 20:12,20) We need to understand His character and as much about

Him as possible and not just the right name to refer to Him by. If the Sabbath is not being used for this purpose, then as far as God is concerned we are profaning it. (Ezekiel 20:13,16,21)

In Ezekiel 36 after all of Israel is in captivity, he explains further:

²⁰ **Wherever they went, they brought disgrace on my holy name, because people would say, <These are the people of the LORD, but they had to leave his land.>** ²¹ **That made me concerned for my holy name, since the Israelites brought disgrace on it everywhere they went.**

²² Now then, give the Israelites the message that I, the Sovereign LORD, have for them: **What I am going to do is not for the sake of you Israelites, but for the sake of my holy name**, which you have disgraced in every country where you have gone. ²³ When I demonstrate to the nations the holiness of my great name—the name you disgraced among them—**then they will know that I am the LORD...** (²⁸) You will be my people, and I will be your God... ³² Israel, I want you to know that **I am not doing all this for your sake...** ³⁶ Then the neighboring nations that have survived will know that I, the LORD, rebuild ruined cities and replant waste fields. I, The LORD, have promised that I would do this—and I will. (*GNB*)

This is why Ezekiel repeats the phrase “Then they will know that I am the LORD” or “for my name’s sake” or something similar at least 46 times in his book. Isn’t it clear in these passages that God’s reputation is more important than ours? Could every one of us reject Him and God still win the great controversy? (See Romans 3:4) If the absolute trustworthiness of God is not established in this great controversy, then the entire universe is in jeopardy! But that is exactly what was confirmed by the life and death of Jesus.

6. What do you think is implied by the following commonly used expressions in Ezekiel:
- Son of man - 93 occurrences
 - Rebellious house (people) - 21 times (see especially Ezekiel 2,12,20)
 - Then they will know that I am the Lord - more than 70 times (Ezekiel 20:12,20,44; 36:11,23,36; 39:7,22,28)
 - For my own name’s sake - Ezekiel 20:9,14,22,44; 36:20-23,31,32,36,38; 39:6,7; 25-29; 43:5-9; compare Isaiah 48:11
 - Wrath and anger - Ezekiel 5, 7, 8, 13, 22, 36
 - “The LORD God” - Ezekiel 2:4 - occurs 217 times

“Son of man”

The Hebrew terms for “man” are:

ish - male or husband; 16

enosh - man in his frailty, disease and mortality;

adam - man in a generic sense of “mankind”, “humanity”;

geber - man in his youthful vigor.

Ninety three times in this book Ezekiel is addressed as “son of man” reminding him that God was speaking to him as a human being, in our language, humble and inadequate as that may be at times. God chooses to address us through other humans and He asks those humans to spread the “good news”. God doesn’t address us directly with some superhuman form of communication, or even send angels to instruct us. Ezekiel is addressed by his personal name only twice in the entire book: Ezekiel 1:3 and 24:24. Most of the time Ezekiel is addressed as follows:

Ezekiel 2:1:

(*Biblia Hebraica*) .t̄aor Bēlāy' yī gō'Al [' d̄m̄] b̄lāA=B, yī ae r̄māYne¹

...Uib; aḥqrwḥpou... (*LXX, Septuagint*)

...and He saith unto me, 'Son of man, stand on thy feet, and I speak with thee.' (*Young's Literal Translation*)

...Son of man... (*Geneva; KJV; NKJV; Darby; ASV; CEV; God's Word; NASB; NASB-1995; NIV; NJB; NLT; RSV; Amplified; Leeser; New World; Moffatt; Douay-Confraternity; Clear Word; Jerusalem; Knox*)

...son of dust... (*TLB*)

...Man... (*NEB; Anchor*)

...O man... (*REB*)

...Human... (*NCV*)

...Mortal man... (*GNB*)

...O, Mortal... (*NRSV; Tanakh, the Holy Scriptures*)

...O Mortal man... (*Smith-Goodspeed*)

Notice the footnotes from various versions below:

The New Revised Standard Version: Or *son of man*; Heb *ben Adam* (and so throughout the book when Ezekiel is addressed).

The New American Bible: Son of man: a formal way of saying simply "man"; God's habitual way of addressing the prophet throughout this book. Probably the title is used to emphasize the separation of the divine and the human.

The Contemporary English Version: 2:1 Ezekiel, son of man: The Hebrew text has "Son of man," which is often used in this book when the LORD speaks directly to Ezekiel. It means that Ezekiel is a mere human, yet he is the one the LORD has chosen to be his prophet who speaks for him to the people of Israel.

The Living Bible: 2:1 son of dust, or "son of man," appears eighty-seven times throughout the book of Ezekiel. The connotation is "mortal man." In Daniel 7:13, the corresponding Aramaic expression is used for the Messiah as representative of the human race of which he is the head.

The Anchor Bible: 2:1 Man. Hebrew *ben 'adam* "son of mankind"; *ben* + generic noun is a common manner of expressing a male member of a class; e.g., *ben baqar* "a (male) head of cattle." *ben 'adam* is almost entirely limited to poetic or prophetic literature; Ezekiel is called this in order to single him out from the divine beings that fill this scene. He continues to be addressed thus throughout the book (over eighty times) rather than by name (contrast Amos 7:8; 8:2; Jer 1:11; 24:3), underlining his mortal nature among the divine beings he sees and has contact with (chs. 8-11; 40ff.).

In the New Testament the same expression is used as Jesus' favorite way to address Himself! He does so thirty times in Matthew; fourteen times in Mark; twenty-five times in Luke;

and eleventimes in John. See Matthew 12:8; 16:27; Mark 8:31, 38; Luke 22:22; John 3:13, 14; etc.

Why do you think God chose this title for Ezekiel and also for Himself?

“Rebellious house” - the term here is literally “rebellious heathen”. This is what those who were supposed to be a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6) and a royal household had sunk to!

Ezekiel 2:5:

(*Biblia Hebraica*) p .k/ʔb] hyh; aybh: yKi W[d]wðhMhēyrm] tyBeyKi Wl Dj jAaiwW[m]y/Aai hMhēwð
...oiko" parapikrainwn... (*LXX- Septuagint*)
...rebellious house... (*Geneva, KJV, Darby, ASV, NAB, NASB, NASB 1995, NIV, NKJV, NRSV, RSV, YLT*)
...rebels... (*GNB, CEV, TLB, NLT*)
...tribe of rebels... (*New Jerusalem Bible*,
...nation of rebels... (*Tanakh*)
...rebellious family (*Leeser*)
...rebellious folk... (*Moffatt*)
...rebellious people... (*God's Word*)
...a people who have turned against me. (*NCV*)

Ezekiel 2:4-8; 3:9,26,27; 12:1-3,9,25; 17:11; 24:2; 44:6. Compare Exodus 32:9; 33:3,5; Deuteronomy 9:13.

“(Literally: the sons, stiff-faced and hardhearted). Israel’s problem was not one of ignorance, but rather a deliberate and obstinate rebellion to the known will of God.” (*KJV Bible Commentary*)

“God describes them as **a rebellious nation** and more specifically **impudent and stubborn**—literally “stiff-of-face and hard-of-heart children” (see 3:7). The Hebrew term for *rebellious* indicates a breaking of the covenant relationship.” (*Nelson Study Bible*)

“Rather than acknowledging God’s judgment and confessing their sins, the Jewish exiles viewed their time in Babylon as a temporary setback that would be alleviated by their soon return to Jerusalem. They refused to admit their sin or to believe the threat of impending judgment on their disobedient nation.” (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*)

“A rebellious nation. Literally, “nations that are rebellious.” The word rendered “nation” is the one frequently translated “heathen.” So low had Israel sunk in her willful departure from God that she, who was to have been the royal nation, the kingdom of priests (see Ex. 19:6), is now addressed by the derogatory title “heathen,” and that with the additional epithet “rebellious.” The prophet is further reminded that Israel’s defection is of long standing.” (*SDA Bible Commentary on Ezekiel 2:3*)

“This is a tremendous statement that God makes: ‘I am going to send you to these people—they are “a rebellious nation.”’ The word *rebellious* occurs again and again in the Book of Ezekiel. They are a people in rebellion against God.

“The word that is translated “nation” is not the word that God generally used for His chosen people. The word in the Hebrew is *goi*, and it is the word that Israel used to speak of the Gentiles, the pagans, the heathen. What has happened is that Israel has sunk to the level of the heathen people who lived round about them. God says that they are “a rebellious nation”—they’ve rebelled against Him—and they are “impudent children.”

“My friend, the hardest people to reach with the gospel today are church members—those who are in church and who have rejected the gospel and rejected the Word of God. Although they are in church, they are actually against God. They think that being a Christian means to be nice little boys and girls. They play at church—it’s a nice game for them. They seek to be sweet and to keep their noses clean. They want to live a life on the surface which is very sedate and comfortable. They don’t want anyone coming in and telling them they are lost sinners who need to be saved and to become obedient to God. They are hard people to reach, and my heart goes out to my brethren who are in the ministry today—they are sitting on a hot seat. And I would counsel any young man who is considering the ministry to be sure about his call. If he is not sure of his call, maybe he should sell insurance or something else rather than go into the ministry. To be in the ministry today is not easy *if you are going to stand for the Word of God.*” (*Thru the Bible Commentary*)

Ezekiel 6:7: “Then they will know that I am the LORD” - this expression is used to apply to Israel, the surrounding nations, Jerusalem, the exiles, etc. God is constantly trying to reach out and speak to us at whatever level He can reach us. His ultimate goal is always to teach us the truth about Himself, not just through claims, but through demonstration. This is a confirmation of the fact that the ultimate issue in the great controversy is the truth about God and His character and government and not just how He plans to save you and me.

“Ezekiel 6:13 Then you shall know that I am the LORD: As in vv. 7, 10, the Lord states the purpose of the coming destruction of His city and many of its people. **The use of God’s personal name further emphasizes the intent to bring His people back to a personal, intimate relationship with Himself.**” (*Nelson Study Bible*)

“Ezekiel 6:9 Will remember Me: The goal of the punishment is corrective and redemptive, that **they shall know that I am the LORD** (vv. 7, 10, 13, 14). This latter phrase is one of the most characteristic expressions of Ezekiel. It occurs in this form over 50 times, and with expansion another 18 times.” (*Spirit Filled Life Study Bible*)

“Ezekiel 6:7 Ezekiel was sent to the Hebrew captives in Babylon (Ezek. 2:1–5; 3:14–15). Despite the fact that the Babylonians had invaded Judah twice, fulfilling the warnings of the prophet Jeremiah, the exiles still did not understand why God had allowed these events to happen, nor why they had been deported to Babylon. **They still had not grasped the fact that their nation’s troubles were the result of their idolatry and other sins against the Lord.**

“God used Ezekiel to make this truth clear. Time after time, over a period of at least 20 years, the prophet spelled out the people’s sins and warned them of the certainty of God’s wrath. Nevertheless, the people remained willfully blind to their condition.

“This hardness of heart helps to explain why the phrase, “You (or they) shall know that I am the Lord,” is repeated some 60 or 70 times in the book (6:7, 10, 13, 14). Quite often, these declarations can be found in the middle of a promise of God’s wrath: “The slain shall fall” (6:7); “I would bring this calamity” (6:10); “thus will I spend My fury” (6:12); “I will ... make the land desolate” (6:14).

“We will either know the Lord in His grace and mercy, or in His wrath and fury. The choice is ours. But regardless of our response, God makes it clear that “You shall know that I am the Lord.” God is determined to be heard. He is the Lord—and sooner or later, we will know that He is.” (*Word-in-Life Study Bible* on Ezekiel 6:7)

Ezekiel 6:7: “and ye shall know. ver. 6:7,10, 13, 14. Ezk 7:4, 9, 27. 11:10, 12. 12:15, 16, 20. 13:9, 14, 21, 23. 14:8. 15:7. 16:62. 17:21, 24. 20:12, 20, 38, 42, 44. 21:5. 22:16, 22. 23:49. 24:24, 27. 25:5, 7, 11, 17. 26:6. 28:22, 23, 24, *26. 29:6, 9, 16, 21. 30:8, 19, 25, 26. 32:15. 33:29. *34:27, 30. 35:4, 9, 12, 15. 36:11, 23, 36, 38. *37:6, 13, 14, 28. *38:16, 23. 39:6, *7, 22, *23, 28. Ex 7:5-9. 10:2.

14:4, 18. 1 K 20:28. 2 K 19:19. Ps 83:17, 18. Je 24:7. Da *4:35-37. 6:26, 27. Jl 2:27. *3:17.” (*The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* on Ezekiel 6:7) [This is a fairly complete list of the passages in Ezekiel that use this expression. Those passages marked with * or / are particularly interesting. Passages marked with ♪ are quoted from the Pentateuch.]

“**Ezekiel 6:7**: you shall know that I am YHWH. The name YHWH is properly synonymous with power (to punish and to rescue), sovereignty, holiness, and authorship and control of events. Presently it is not recognized as such either in Israel, who are apostate or faithless, or among the nations, who are idolatrous. But when disaster strikes them or they experience a miraculous deliverance, the God who announced the event through the prophet will be acknowledged as possessing the attributes properly attached to his name. For roughly contemporary variations of this idea, compare Jeremiah 16:21:

“So now I am going to show them,
Once for all I will show them
My power and my might,
And they shall know that YHWH is my name.

And again Isaiah 52:6:

“Assuredly my people shall know my name;
Assuredly, on that day, that it is I who have spoken,
Here I am!

“In Ezekiel this clause is a characteristic close of oracles or sections within oracles (some sixty occurrences), and it expresses the intended effect of the event predicted in the oracle. Outside Ezekiel it figures in the priestly narrative of the events of the Exodus (e.g., Exod 7:5; 14:4, 18) and in the story about the anonymous prophets who encouraged Ahab (I Kings 20:13, 28). Zimmerli has dealt with the expression at great length in *Erkenntnis Gottes. . .*” *Anchor Bible Commentary, Ezekiel 1-20*, p. 133

“**Ezekiel 6:7. Ye shall know.** Instead of acknowledging God and heeding His revelations, the people ‘mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy’ (2 Chron. 36:16). They refused to acknowledge the genuineness of the divine message until rudely awakened by the doom threatened by these despised prophets. **The fulfillment of prophecy constituted the divine seal upon the validity of the prophet and his work.**

“In their idolatry the Israelites had compared Jehovah with the gods of the heathen and had regarded Him as only one of the many deities to be worshiped. Their choice of gods had been on the basis of who they thought would bring them the greatest prosperity (see 2 Chron. 28:23). **In combating this demoralizing philosophy the prophets had set forth two main lines of evidence to prove the superiority of the true God over those who were gods only in name: first, Jehovah’s creative power, and second, His prophetic ability (Isa. 45; Jer. 10).** This latter evidence is here presented as the one that would eventually force from the lips of the stubborn Israelites the confession that Jehovah was, after all, the true and only God. How the heart of God had hoped that such an acknowledgment would come while there was yet remedy! How loath God was to permit His chosen ones to reap the fruits of their own stubborn unbelief!

“**Prophecy and its fulfillment are elsewhere set forth as a reason for belief: ‘And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe’ (John**

14:29). This constitutes, perhaps, the most powerful evidence that the Scriptures are divine, and that God is what He has declared Himself to be. Prophecy is the argument against which the skeptic has found no logical rebuttal. In our day there is an accumulation of prophetic evidence. Those who refuse to acknowledge its validity and thus the claims of the God who uttered it, will finally, like Israel of old, be forced to acknowledge the sovereignty of the only true and living God.

“The expression ‘ye shall know’ or its equivalent occurs 88 times in Ezekiel, and is the keynote of the book. It was because Israel did not ‘know’ that they were carried into captivity (Isa. 1:3; 5:13; Hosea 4:6). The Captivity was an educational process. Through sore adversity, God’s people were to learn what they had failed to learn during times of prosperity (DA 28; see Vol. IV, p. 31).” (*SDA Bible Commentary* on Ezekiel 6:7)

Ezekiel 6:10: “And they shall know that I am the LORD, and that I have not said in vain that I would do this evil unto them [Ezek. 6:10].

“And they shall know that I am the LORD”—this is said three times in this chapter, and it is another result of judgment. Again, we do not see this result happening in our own day. Instead of recognizing the hand of God, people are saying that He is not even there. They argue that if He did exist, He would always help them. Oh, my friend, where do we get that idea? **God is judging sin. People rebel against this; they do not want a God who judges.** You can make a God after your own likeness if you want to, but the holy God is still out there. You might wish He would go away, but He is not going to go away. He will continue to judge.” (*Thru the Bible Commentary*)

“For my own name’s sake” - this is a similar expression. God must do many things to protect His own reputation. (See end of #1 and #5 above) See handout **“For My Own Name’s Sake”**.

God’s wrath is again described in Ezekiel repeatedly as God letting us go to reap the natural consequences of our rebellious behavior. (See Ezekiel 5:8-17; 7:12-19; 13:13-15; 16:26; 20:8,13,21,22, **25-26**, 33; **21:31**; 22:18-31; 24:3-14; 36:5-15; 38:18-23; **39:21-29**) Compare **Judges Teacher’s Guide** #9.

“The Lord GOD is a title of God used some 217 times in the book (while used elsewhere in the Old Testament only 103 times). The Hebrew expression is *Adonai Yahweh*. The first word emphasizes God’s sovereignty; the second emphasizes His eternal existence and character as the God of covenant, history, and ethics.” (*King James Version Study Bible*)

“GOD told Ezekiel **to emphasize the divine origin of his messages** by using these words. Like Moses (Ex. 3; 4), Ezekiel would speak in God’s name only what God commanded him. The term *Lord GOD* combines a title indicating God’s sovereignty (*Adonai*) and His personal name (*Yahweh*, conventionally translated with GOD or LORD in small capital letters).” (*Nelson Study Bible* on Ezekiel 2:4)

“Thus saith the Lord God. The charge to Ezekiel is the divine commission to every teacher of the Word, to every expositor of sacred truth. God’s Word is not to be intermixed with human opinions. Private theories are fallible. Concerning divine matters, only those things that God has revealed can be definitely known as facts. All else is human opinion. With every wind of doctrine blowing and every species of interpretation abroad, men need the reassurance of a message backed by a “Thus saith the Lord God.” Such a declaration is the voice of authority. Ezekiel needed such a warrant. Judah’s doom was impending. His message came bearing the credentials from the highest authority.” (*SDA Bible Commentary* on Ezekiel 2:4)

Ezekiel 2:4: ⁴ And the sons are brazen-faced and hard-hearted to whom I am sending thee, and thou hast said unto them: Thus said **the Lord Jehovah:** (*Young's Literal Translation; Darby; ASV*)

...h/hyōyndā)... (*Hebrew*)

...kurio" ... (*LXX-Septuagint-Greek*)

...the Lord GOD... (*Geneva; KJV; NKJV; Living Bible; NAB; NASB; NASB 1995; NCV; RSV; NRSV; Tanakh; CEV; Amplified; NEB; Knox*)

...the Lord Eternal... (*Leeser*)

...the Eternal... (*Moffatt*)

...the Sovereign LORD... (*GNB; NIV; NLT;*

...Lord Yahweh... (*Jerusalem; New Jerusalem Bible;*

...the Almighty LORD... (*God's Word*)

...I... or ...the Lord.. (*Clear Word*)

The Anchor Bible 1:28—3:15 THE COMMISSIONING pp. 64,65

With respect to the double appellation of the deity ^a*donay* YHWH “(my) Lord YHWH,” it is to be noted that often in the messenger formula the sender’s name is accompanied (preceded in biblical usage) by a qualifier—“your servant,” “your brother”; in this context ^a*donay* YHWH may well have been interpreted thus, ^a*donay* meaning something between “my lord” (its literal, vocative sense) and a divine name (see the perplexed treatment in BDB, p. 11, defs. 3 and 4) but in any case clearly conveying the notion “Lord” (cf. the archaic formula ha’adon YHWH, Exod 23:17; 34:23). The double appellation occurs 217 times in this book, overwhelmingly (208 times) in the opening formulas of oracles (as here) and in their closings (or internal pauses) in the phrase *n^eum^a donay YHWH* “the speech of Lord YHWH”; in these phrases the tetragram alone does not occur. **This preference appears to be rhetorical, a verbal signature to the oracle.** In our passage the mere message formula, without any specific content to be delivered, is dictated to the prophet. Now, since an alternative wording for the charge to speak to the people was available (see vss. 7; 3:4), this choice of the empty messenger formula must have its own significance. It may be suggested that the meaning of the mere formula, with its double divine appellation, is given by the context of vss. 3—5. Israel’s rebelliousness is emphasized; it is the prophet’s duty to take them to task in the name of their Lord, against whom they have rebelled. The very pairing of YHWH with “Lord” aims to force upon them awareness of their true state—subjection to a Lord whom they refuse to acknowledge. The imprint of this initial experience of a messenger formula with a double appellative (chosen here for its specific contextual value) became normative for the rest of Ezekiel’s experience. He continued to use the double appellative virtually without variation in the openings of all his messages, and in a common closing formula (see at 5:11) as a kind of divine signature. (This suggestion resembles that made earlier with regard to the consistent use of ben ’adam as the prophet’s appellative, from the call narrative onward.) J. Lust has proposed that since only in the prophet’s speech does this double appellation appear, it must be understood personally, “my Lord YHWH” (Lust revocalizes ^a*doni*), and is intended to deny the people’s servanthship to YHWH in the present, as opposed to the future (in *De Mari a Qumran: Hommage a J. Coppens*, ed. H. Cazelles [Gembloux: Duculot, 1969], pp. 167—73).

Is it possible that all the passages labeled with this expression in the book of Ezekiel are actually direct quotes from the angel or from God that Ezekiel is just copying down? If so this would make a great deal of the book of Ezekiel the direct words of God. How does this affect our understanding of the “inspiration” of this book?

7. Why were some prophets given views of both God and Lucifer/Satan? Is there anything special about these messages and the messengers or the times in which they lived that might explain why? Which prophets actually received such messages? Can you think of examples from Moses? Isaiah? Jeremiah? Daniel? Zechariah? John?

Some prophets clearly saw both God and the Devil in vision or were given messages about both. Where would you look for historical evidence and proof of the existence of the Devil or Satan?

Moses: Genesis 3, Exodus 33,34; Job 1 and 2

Isaiah: 9 and 14

Ezekiel: 1,10, and 28

Daniel 7:9-14; 10:4-11:2

Zechariah 3:1-5

Revelation 1, 12-14, 20-22

There are a number of references in the Bible to Satan or the Devil: Job 1:6-2:7; 1 Chronicles 21:1; Zechariah 3:1-5; Matthew 4:1-11; 6:13; 12:22-28; 16:23; Mark 3:22-26; 4:15; 8:33; Luke 4:1-13; 10:18; 11:14-20; 13:16; 22:3,31; John 12:31; 13:27; Acts 5:3; Romans 16:20; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 2 Corinthians 2:11; 4:4; 11:3,14; 12:7; Ephesians 2:2; 6:11-17; 1 Thessalonians 2:18; 3:5; 1 Timothy 1:20; 2:14; 3:7; 5:15; 2 Timothy 3:13; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 2:13,14; 3:8-12; Jude 1:9; Revelation 2:9,24; 3:9; 12:9; 12: 13: 20

For more detail see the handout on **Satan**.

8. Does Ezekiel give us any new insights into the meaning of the Sabbath? (Ezekiel 20:12,20; compare Hebrews 4:9-11; Isaiah 66:23) What did Ezekiel say was the purpose of the Sabbath? Is it primarily a reminder of an event(s)? Or of a relationship? What kind of a relationship would you have with God if you knew that He had said "either obey Me, or I will torture you to death" (even forever, as some believe)? Did the Jews get Ezekiel's message about the Sabbath? In Jesus' day were they keeping it for all the right reasons?

"Ezekiel 20:12 Sabbaths. The Sabbath (vv. 13, 16, 21, 24) is singled out as a law unique to Israel, one that most clearly distinguished it from the nations. **The Sabbath is often cited as an important example that stands for the whole law** (22:8, 26; 23:38; 44:24; cf. Neh. 13:18; Is. 56:2, 4, 6; Jer. 17:19-27)." (*New Geneva Study Bible* - on Eze. 20:12)

"Ezekiel 20:12. I gave them my sabbaths. Not that the Sabbath was first instituted at Sinai, for it had existed since creation (Gen. 2:1-3); but it was there commanded anew. The word "remember" in the fourth commandment implies its earlier existence (see Ex. 16:22-28; PP 258). The Decalogue (Ex. 20:8-11) presents the great facts of the creation history as the basis for the Sabbath. God created "heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is" in six literal days (see on Gen. 1:5). On the seventh day He rested, and set the day apart as the day of rest for all mankind (Mark 2:27). The observance of the Sabbath is then a mark, or sign, that he who honors the day acknowledges Jehovah as his God, for only to Him do these facts of creation apply. The observance of the day does not rest upon any natural division of time into weekly cycles, but upon an express command of God, and belief in His revelation. Men may reason that the salutary purposes of the Sabbath could be as readily realized upon another day. However, God has specified a particular day. He has bidden us to keep it holy, free from worldly pursuits and personal pleasures (Isa. 58:13). This obligation men cannot with impunity escape.

The prophecies of Rev. 12-14 make it clear that the Sabbath will be the point especially controverted in the days preceding the coming of the Son of man (see GC 605). God's remnant will

be distinguished by their observance of the commandments of God (Rev. 12:17; 14:12), including the Sabbath command. At the same time apostate religious powers will exalt a false sabbath and demand allegiance to it. Men will be called upon to decide between the Sabbath of the Lord and the substitute sabbath, or first day of the week. The keeping of the Sabbath will thus again become a distinctive test and constitute a sign (called a seal, Rev. 7) of true worshipers (see GC 640).” (*SDA Bible Commentary* article on Ezekiel 20:12)

Read Ezekiel 20 all the way through in the *Good News Bible* translation, if possible. In this context Ezekiel 20:12 and 20 have special significance. The Sabbath was obviously intended to be a reminder of what Yahweh was supposed to mean to them and all that He would have done for them. By contrast they defiled the Sabbath (Ezekiel 20:13,16,21,24; 22:8; 23:38,39). They seemed incapable of observing the Sabbath as God intended! They either defiled it by doing all sorts of evil things during the sacred hours, or they promoted Sabbath keeping with such rigor and legalism that it was impossible for anyone to really enjoy it. (See Isaiah 58:13,14) It appears that they never did get a clear idea of the purpose of the Sabbath.

9. What is the purpose of the terrible pictures of idolatry and immorality in Ezekiel 16 and 23? Compare this language with the language of Hosea. Contrast it with the way God felt about them (Ezekiel 18:1-4,8,23,31,32; 33:11). Compare Jeremiah 31:29-34.

See the handout on ***Ezekiel 16 and 23***.

Why would God picture Himself as married to two prostitutes?! The only possible reason must be that, in actuality, that was the best way to represent what happened! He certainly is not recommending this as an example to us—despite Hosea! God felt so close and tied to the children of His friend Abraham that it was like being married to them. And when they did virtually everything possible to despise Him, and abuse their relationship, He tried to put how He felt into language that would portray as clearly as possible how He felt about it all. The best He could do in human terms was to describe a violated marriage relationship. All the while His heart yearned for them to come back to Him so He could give them new hearts and right spirits.

10. Why did God cut off the righteous with the wicked? (Ezekiel 21:3,4) What about this? Did the invading armies of Nebuchadnezzar carefully distinguish between saints and sinners? Is this fair? How was Jeremiah treated? What about Ezekiel and Daniel? (Compare Ezekiel 20:47)

“God said that by a **sword** He would **cut off . . . both the righteous and the wicked**. This seems to contradict Ezekiel’s earlier prophecy (18:1-24) that only the **wicked** would die and the **righteous** would live. This problem so perplexed the translators of the Septuagint that they changed “righteous” to “unrighteous.” One possible solution is that “the righteous and the wicked” may be viewed from the people’s perspective. As far as the people could tell the judgment was indiscriminate. It affected those who were in open idolatry as well as those who claimed to be followers of God. Yet in God’s eyes only the wicked were being punished since He had promised to deliver those who were truly righteous. Another solution is that the phrase “cut off” may refer to captivity, not physical death. Whatever the exact meaning, Ezekiel was stressing the extent of the coming judgment.” (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* on Ezekiel 21:3,4)

One of the most terrible things about evil and sin is that the innocent often suffer with the guilty. When a drunk driver comes across the center divider in a highway and has a head-on collision with a family on their way to church killing all of them, we are reminded that sin has consequences, even for those who are not sinning at the moment. As a result of sin we live in a dangerous world. Our collective sins are responsible for these consequences either directly or indirectly. (See Deuteronomy 29:19, *GNB*)

11. Why is idolatry so bad? Does it represent a definitive decision against God in the great controversy? Why would the adversary love to have us worship anything or anybody, other than our intelligent, gracious God? Why would anybody choose to worship an idol?

Perhaps the best portrayal of the foolishness of idolatry is found in Isaiah by contrasting Isaiah 40:12-31 with Isaiah 44:9-20. It should be obvious that we will never achieve a satisfactory healing relationship with our wonderful God if we turn away from Him for any reason and especially if we substitute some artificial "god" in His place. But idolatry is worse than that. It leads people to turn to the worst passions of humanity and make them a part of their "worship" of these "gods." In effect, human beings take their own selves and make them "bigger than life" and "create" "gods" that are in their own image. Maybe this is why it is so easy for us to identify with these "gods".

Yahweh on the other hand is asking us to "come up to a higher level." He is challenging us to give Him an opportunity to help us become like Him. If we get a real understanding of the different choices being offered in the great controversy and their consequences, then the Devil will lose every time, but many of us are not willing to take the time to carefully study the choices that are open to us.

12. Are you quite certain that Ezekiel 28 is talking about Lucifer/Satan? What about Isaiah 14? Would you dare to use these passages when discussing the subject with someone who didn't believe in Satan? What else could these passages be talking about?

"This lamentation directed toward the king of Tyre defies explanation unless an allusion is being made to that malignant spiritual being called "Satan" or the "devil," for whom the king of Tyre becomes a type. The king is described as perfect in beauty, living in Eden, the anointed cherub, a created being, and proud and corrupt because of his arrogance and beauty. Those words were true of the king of Tyre, but they also are a perfect description of Satan. The word "satan" is derived from a Hebrew verb meaning "to lie in wait." From this the word develops the nuance of "adversary" (cf. Num. 22:22) or "opponent" (cf. Zech. 3:1). Other prominent names for Satan include "devil" (*diabolos*, Gk.), which means "accuser"; the "ruler of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2); the "prince of this world" (John 12:31); the "adversary" (*antidikos*, Gk., in 1 Pet. 5:8); "Beelzebub" (Matt. 12:24); "the great dragon" (Rev. 12:9). Based upon information gleaned from a comparison of this passage with Isa. 14; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6, and other passages, the following picture of Satan begins to emerge. Satan was created (v. 15) as one of a host of angelic beings. He was exquisitely beautiful and was the anointed cherub, i.e., the captain of the cherubic hosts (v. 14). Sometime prior to the creation of the natural order, Satan became vain about his beauty and position, and his heart became rebellious against God. Apparently, he was able to secure a considerable following among the angels, resulting in the expulsion of himself and his followers from heaven (Luke 10:18; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 12:4). Since that day, Satan has devoted himself to opposing the work of God in every way possible (cf. 1 Tim. 3:7; 2 Tim. 2:26), and has attempted to destroy all of the good that God has created in the natural order (1 Pet. 5:8). He is allowed to continue this way for a period but will ultimately be confined to hell for eternity (Rev. 20:10). As a matter of fact, hell was originally prepared for Satan (Matt. 25:41). Too often Satan is viewed only in his role as tempter (1 Cor. 7:5). Actually, the Scriptures ascribe to him a variety of malignant activities. He is also "the accuser," discouraging and weakening believers by reminding them of forgiven sin, and accusing unbelievers to the extent that they despair of possible forgiveness. Satan perverts the Scriptures (Gen. 3:4, 5; Matt. 4:6), hinders the gospel (Matt. 13:19; 16:23), appears as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14; cf. Acts 5:3), performs miracles in order to deceive (Rev. 16:14), and opposes God's work (John 8:44; 13:2, 27; 1 Thess. 2:18). Despite all of his power, Satan is neither omniscient, omnipresent, nor omnipotent (cf. Eph. 6:11; James 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:9). He is limited to the power that God temporarily

allows him (cf. 1 Cor. 10:13) and can even be used by God for good (2 Cor. 12:7). However, he is assisted by a host of other malignant spirits, who add to the effectiveness of his work. Christ came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). In fact, it was the death of Christ that was preeminently the fatal blow to Satan (Gen. 3:15; John 12:31–33; Col. 2:14, 15; Heb. 2:14). The work begun at the cross, which is the beginning of the end for Satan, culminates in Satan's destruction at the close of the millennial age (Rev. 20:10)." (*Believer's Study Bible*)

"Ezekiel 28:1–10. The third oracle is directed against the prince of Tyre, who at this time was Ethbaal III (591/90–573/72 B.C.). His sin was his claim to be divine. He said, **I am a God**; but God said, **thou art a man** (v. 2). Because of his presumption, the prince would be killed by his enemies, thus proving his mortality (vv. 8, 9).

"Ezekiel 28:11–19. The change of addressee from the prince of Tyre to the **king** of Tyre in verse 12 has prompted much discussion. However, there seems little doubt that Satan is in view in these verses as the real power behind the wicked society and government of Tyre. This is evident from several considerations: (1) He is called **the anointed cherub** (v. 14). The word *cherub* is used in the Old Testament only to refer to angelic creatures. (2) The name of one of the chief gods of Tyre was Melcart, which means "King of the City." It would have been clear to all of Ezekiel's listeners that the deity supposed to exist behind the earthly ruler was in mind. (3) The change of addressee from prince of Tyre to king of Tyre indicates that someone other than the earthly ruler is in view. (4) Finally, Paul seems to have this passage in mind when, in listing the qualifications for an elder, he stipulates that the elder "be not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (1 Tim. 3:6). As a descriptive passage on Satan, the content reveals more about his fall than any other. He served near the presence of God (v. 14), was perfect (v. 15), became guilty of the sin of pride (v. 17), began to deal in iniquitous trade (v. 18), and is therefore destined for judgment (vv. 16, 18, 19). The statement **Thou wast perfect ... till iniquity was found in thee** (v. 15) is the closest that the Bible ever comes to explaining the origin of sin. It began when one of God's previously perfect creatures rebelled against Him." (*King James Version Study Bible*)

Some however take a quite different approach to understanding this passage:

"Ezekiel 28:12 Seal of perfection is more literally "the one sealing a plan" (the same Hebrew word for "plan" or "pattern" appears once more at 43:10). In effect, the king affixed the official seal of his signet ring to the plans that made Tyre one of the leading centers of commerce in that day. **wisdom . . . beauty:** These descriptions mark out the king of Tyre as an exceptional ruler, displaying the ideals of kingship in the ancient Middle East.

"28:13 in Eden, the garden of God: This is possibly an exaggerated comparison: this king invaded a place like Eden in its beauty. **created:** The Hebrew verb for *created* is the same as the one used in Gen. 1:1. Just as in Genesis, the word emphasizes God's active work in history. It was God's sovereign plan and purpose to allow this man to become king.

"28:14 The holy mountain of God could be "the holy mountain of gods." According to Canaanite beliefs, the "seat of the gods" was in the "mountains," or the "mountains of the north" (see Ps. 48:2). The focus here seems to be on the king of Tyre's attempt to enter into the council of the gods. So instead of the verse referring to the king's presence in Jerusalem, it could refer more logically to a Phoenician ritual, the celebration of their patron god Melqart's fiery resurrection. This king wanted to imitate Melqart.

"Ezekiel 28:15 The term **perfect** does not mean sinless, but complete or flawless. The king of Tyre had been in complete control and was unchallenged until he was filled with prideful **iniquity**.

“Ezekiel 28:16–19 The king’s pride led to materialism, violence, and sinfulness in business and religion. **abundance of your trading**: The expression is most easily and appropriately applied to the human king who was the driving force behind the development of Tyre’s commercial empire. The true God—the pronoun **I**—dethroned the king, derailed his unholy ambitions, and destroyed the source of his pride in order to make his example a deterrent to others. The king’s commercial empire collapsed and his machinations to resemble a god were crushed in the sight of local rulers who would gaze in astonishment.” (*Nelson Study Bible* - article on Ezekiel 28)

“King of Tyre. Ethbaal ruled Tyre at this time. The prophet describes the way God had favored Ethbaal by portraying the king as a primeval being, a figure like Adam, the crown and epitome of creation, living in the garden paradise that God had made. He remained there until wickedness was found in him (v. 15). Some take the prophet to be comparing the king of Tyre to Satan, a glorious being who fell from grace (1 Tim. 3:6).

“28:13, 14 garden ... mountain. The prophet joins two images for the dwelling place of God, a garden (Gen. 2; 3) and a mountain (20:40; Ex. 19:23; Deut. 33:2; Ps. 43:3; 48:1; 87:1; 99:9; Is. 27:13; 56:7; 57:13; 66:20). The temple was built on a mountain and was decorated with floral motifs (40:16–37; 41:18–20, 25–27; 1 Kin. 6:29, 32, 35; 7:18, 20, 22, 36, 42; 2 Chr. 3:5).” (*New Geneva Study Bible*)

“Ezekiel 28:11 This lamentation is similar to a taunt song (see note on 19:1-14) addressed to **the king of Tyre** (v. 12). Many see in this passage (and in Is. 14) the fall of Satan, a view held by several of the church fathers in the second half of the fourth century A.D. Such an interpretation is strengthened in light of its extreme descriptions (vv. 16, 17), but does not take full account of the context. The fall of the king of Tyre might equally reflect the fall of Adam, the first king, as well as the fall of any proud man. In this sense one can also see Satan’s fall for the fall of any proud person reflects the fall of Satan, who in himself personifies pride. Like Adam or like Satan prior to his fall, the king of Tyre belongs to God in a unique way and is perfect in creation (**the seal of perfection**, see Gen. 1:27, 31). He is destined to carry out God’s plans and is placed **in Eden** (v. 13) in the presence of God. Unlike Adam, who was naked (Gen. 2:25), the king of Tyre is covered with **every precious stone** to denote his beauties and glories (see Ex. 28:17-20 for the stones on the breastplate of the high priest).

“Vv. 14, 15 are the most conclusive evidence that this text likely refers to Satan’s fall. **Anointed cherub who covers** indicates high office with authority and responsibility to protect and defend (cover) **the holy mountain of God**, an allusion to God’s throne. The high order and specific placement of Lucifer prior to his fall afforded unique opportunity to bring glory to God. (Some see in v. 13 musical reference that suggests his role included leading heaven’s choirs in the worship of the Most High.) His fall was occasioned by his seeking to have this glory for himself (see Is. 14:12-17).

“The sin of the king of Tyre is that in **the abundance of his trading he became filled with violence within**, and God **cast him out of the mountain of God** (v. 16).” (*Spirit Filled Life Study Bible* on Ezekiel 28)

“Ezekiel 28:12–19 This lament over the king of Tyre employs imagery drawn from the creation story (Gen. 2) and ancient Near Eastern mythology. The most logical understanding is that these verses were a funeral lament for the king of Tyre. Many interpreters have also seen a description of Satan in the hyperbolic language used by Ezekiel. Parts of the description do point to more than a human creature: “anointed cherub” (v. 14), previous resident “on the holy mountain of God” rather than on the earth (v. 14), and one who “walked ... in the midst of fiery stones” (Ezek. 28:14). It is also possible that Ezekiel moved his focus from the historical king of Tyre to the figurative character.

No doubt Ezekiel meant to associate the king of Tyre with an exalted cherub in order to emphasize the gravity of the king's sin. Ezekiel's purpose was to describe the judgment of Tyre. Tyre's sin was that of pride and self-exaltation (v. 17). The lament warns against false pride." (*Woman's Study Bible*)

Many Christians do not recognize the existence of the Devil. They feel that the statements about the Devil in Scripture are a rhetorical device to try to help humans understand why they sin so much and make so many mistakes. While they may have many different explanations for why they believe like this, in many cases the real reason is that they feel that if they believe what the Scripture appears to say about the origin of the Devil and thus of evil, it makes God responsible for evil. Many of these people feel that God is so far above us that His sovereignty cannot be questioned. They believe He has determined what is going to happen before it happens. Thus if evil is to be understood as originating with the Devil, who was in turn created by God, this makes God responsible. Now it is true that God takes ultimate responsibility for everything that happens. He stands behind everything He personally does. He takes responsibility for everything He allows. He understands the full consequences of all of the evil that is in this world.

But God also values freedom more highly than many of us realize. Freedom for His creatures was so important to God that He was willing to die rather than give it up or compromise it in any way. But when God allowed freedom, He recognized what the consequences would be. He didn't cause the evil to develop in the mind of Lucifer, nor did it catch Him by surprise. Furthermore, there was not some inherent error or mistake in the way Lucifer was made that caused him to decide for the evil. He chose to exercise the freedom that God gave him in this way and the consequences have been disastrous. (See handout #13 on "**Love**")

It should be obvious that those who take the position that the Devil doesn't exist, cannot recognize the existence of a great controversy as we understand it (Revelation 12:7-12). They do not recognize that Satan has made accusations against God, and they certainly don't recognize the necessity for God to answer these accusations. They see no need whatsoever for God to "take His case into court" (Romans 3:4), because they don't believe that God has to answer to anybody! They believe that God is Sovereign! Even if we tried to ask Him some questions He would not bother to answer them. And we have no right, according to these people, to question anything that God does. Such people would not, of course, recognize that Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 refer to the beginning of that controversy or to the Devil who was behind the actions of the "King of Babylon" and the "Prince of Tyre" in these passages.

It is important to recognize that there are other times in Scripture where a similar "logistical device" is used. In Isaiah 7-9 the birth of a baby is prophesied and it is clearly, in the local context, referring to Maher-shalal-hashbaz, the son born to Isaiah and his wife as a sign that the siege by kings Rezin and Pekah would be lifted. But in Isaiah 9:6 another baby is referred to who is clearly not Maher-shalal-hashbaz but "Wonderful Counselor, Almighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6) This is not the only place where someone is addressed through another person. After Peter's confession of the Messiahship of Christ, Christ finds it necessary to explain to the disciples that a time is coming soon when He will have to go up to Jerusalem and suffer and die. When Peter takes it upon himself to remonstrate with Jesus for this, Jesus addresses *Satan* working through Peter to try to discourage Him in His journey to the cross. (Matthew 16:23)

Many of us do things at times that represent not a careful and thoughtful choice on our part, but a clear prompting from the Devil. Under such circumstances it is very appropriate for Christ, who is God Himself, when speaking of that event or action to address the person who is behind the action or statement rather than the one who is the human instrument. But since the human agent is the one who is immediately apparent, the statement may in some ways apply to both.

13. Where does the fire come from that finally consumes the Devil? (Ezekiel 28:18, *NIV, RSV*) Does this suggest that the fire that will consume the wicked at the end will come forth from within them? What kind of fire could this be?

Please note first of all what was said in #12 above. But for those who recognize the existence of the Devil and believe that he will some day come to an end (See Revelation 20:10), it is interesting to consider how that end will come about. If the wicked are to be stubble (Malachi 4:1) and if the final fire is to be so hot that “the very elements will melt with fervent heat” (2 Peter 3:10,12) when the Devil is thrown into the “lake of fire” is it possible that that fire might actually be the nuclear destruction of the very elements that make up whatever type of material that “Satan” is made up of?

It must be recognized that this passage could also be referring to the destruction of the ancient city of Tyre and its prince at that time.

14. Compare Lucifer/Satan’s statements in Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28 and Matthew 4:8,9, with Christ’s attitude in Philippians 2:5-8. Who would you rather spend eternity with?

Isaiah 14:12-14: ¹² How you have fallen from heaven,

O morning star, son of the dawn!

You have been cast down to the earth,

you who once laid low the nations!

¹³ You said in your heart,

“I will ascend to heaven;

I will raise my throne

above the stars of God;

I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly,

on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.

¹⁴ I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;

I will make myself like the Most High.” *The New International Version*

Ezekiel 28:17: Your heart became proud

on account of your beauty,

and you corrupted your wisdom

because of your splendor.

So I threw you to the earth;

I made a spectacle of you before kings. *The New International Version*

Matthew 4:8,9: ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” *The New International Version*

Philippians 2:5-8: ⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God,

did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

⁷ but made himself nothing,

taking the very nature of a servant,

being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,

he humbled himself

and became obedient to death—

even death on a cross! *The New International Version*

The proud, arrogant, and boastful statements made by Satan suggest a personality that would be very difficult to get along with. He would always want complete servitude, even slavery, from his followers. By contrast Christ takes the role of a servant in serving us. Anybody who would choose the Devil's side after considering this carefully must be a fool. The total freedom and ultimate concern for each other's well being that is represented by Christ's attitude here will be the atmosphere of heaven. That is why God can only allow those to enter there who have a similar attitude. God's requirements for heaven are not arbitrary at all. It is just that considering the kind of Person He is, and what kind of "kingdom" He will run, it would be impossible to allow people with Satan's attitude to enter there. The whole great controversy would just begin all over again!

Zephaniah 3:9-13: ⁹ "Then will I purify the lips of the peoples,

that all of them may call on the name of the LORD
and serve him shoulder to shoulder.

¹⁰ From beyond the rivers of Cush
my worshipers, my scattered people,
will bring me offerings.

¹¹ On that day you will not be put to shame
for all the wrongs you have done to me,
because I will remove from this city
those who rejoice in their pride.
Never again will you be haughty
on my holy hill.

¹² But I will leave within you
the meek and humble,
who trust in the name of the LORD.

¹³ The remnant of Israel will do no wrong;
they will speak no lies,
nor will deceit be found in their mouths.

They will eat and lie down
and no one will make them afraid." *The New International Version*

The contrast here between the attitude of Satan/the Devil and Christ is too clear to need further comment! In the Bible Christ's willingness to come down to live and die for us as a human being is sometimes referred to as "the mystery of godliness". (1 Timothy 3:16) By contrast, the incredible arrogance of Satan in trying to rise to equality with God is referred to as the "mystery of iniquity". (2 Thessalonians 2:7)

15. How does God propose to deal with the sin problem that seems to be afflicting the Jews? (Ezekiel 11:18-20; 18:30-32; 36:24-29; compare Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalms 51:10; Zephaniah 3:7-13, *GNB*) Can God do this? How does He go about doing it? Do we have to cooperate?

God's promises here are certainly generous. But how does He "give us a new heart"? Does God "just do it?" That would violate the freedom that He has paid such a price to preserve. Why does Ezekiel 18:30-32 suggest that we are to get this new mind and heart ourselves when the other passages seem to say that God will give it to us? Does God ever do anything for or to us against our will? There are some remarkable examples in Scripture but they are rare: putting Adam and Eve out of the garden, the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, etc. But these examples do not seem to be directly related to the process of salvation. Does God ever directly violate our freedom to choose?

If God had a way of "saving" His children against their will, wouldn't He save all of them? Wouldn't He have saved Lucifer in the beginning and prevented him from starting the whole rebellion in the first place? Even those whose lives were ended in such catastrophes as the flood will arise

in the final judgment, either at the second coming or the third, and be judged by the One perfectly fair Judge who sees not only what we did in our short lifetimes but what we might have done if we had continued to live. And the book of Job demonstrates that He doesn't make any mistakes in His judgment.

On the other hand, God will do everything that He can without violating our freedom to assist us on the "upward way." If we allow Him to work with us, He can transform our lives! We just need to provide Him the opportunity. The New Covenant as it is described in Jeremiah and repeated here in Ezekiel is what each of us needs to form a lasting relationship with our God.

16. Is there any sense in which God's people could be considered even worse than the heathen nations around them? (Ezekiel 5:6) Compare Isaiah 52:5; Jeremiah 2:33; Ezekiel 36:22; Romans 2:17.

Unfortunately, this was not the first time God found it necessary to speak like this:

1 Kings 14:22-24: The people of Judah sinned against the LORD and did more to arouse his anger against them than all their ancestors had done.²³ They built places of worship for false gods and put up stone pillars and symbols of Asherah to worship on the hills and under shady trees.²⁴ Worst of all, there were men and women who served as prostitutes at those pagan places of worship. The people of Judah practiced all the shameful things done by the people whom the LORD had driven out of the land as the Israelites advanced into the country. (*GNB*)

1 Kings 16:25: But Omri was worse than any of the kings before him; (*TLB*)

1 King 16:30: But he (Ahab) was even more wicked than his father Omri; he was worse than any other king of Israel! (*TLB*)

2 Kings 21:11,12: ¹¹ "Because King Manasseh has done these evil things and is even more wicked than the Amorites who were in this land long ago, and because he has led the people of Judah into idolatry ¹² I will bring such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah that the ears of those who hear about it will tingle with horror. (*TLB*)

Jeremiah 7:26: But they wouldn't listen to them or even try to hear. They are hard and stubborn and rebellious-- worse even than their fathers were. (*TLB*)

Jeremiah 16:12: and you have been worse than your fathers were! You follow evil to your hearts' content and refuse to listen to me. (*TLB*)

Jeremiah 23:14: but the prophets of Jerusalem are even worse! The things they do are horrible; they commit adultery and love dishonesty. They encourage and compliment those who are doing evil instead of turning them back from their sins. These prophets are as thoroughly depraved as the men of Sodom and Gomorrah were." (*TLB*)

Ezekiel 5:6: But Jerusalem rebelled against my commands and showed that she was more wicked than the other nations, more disobedient than the countries around her. Jerusalem rejected by commands and refused to keep my laws. (*GNB*)

Ezekiel 5:6: The Lord God says, "This illustrates what will happen to Jerusalem, for she has turned away from my laws and has been even more wicked than the nations surrounding her." (*TLB*)

Matthew 10:15: Truly, the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah will be better off at Judgment Day than they. (The cities of Judah) (*TLB*)

Matthew 11:23-24: ²³ And Capernaum, though highly honored, shall go down to hell! For if the marvelous miracles I did in you had been done in Sodom, it would still be here today. ²⁴ Truly, Sodom will be better off at the Judgment Day than you." (*TLB*)

Luke 10:12-13: ¹² Even wicked Sodom will be better off than such a city on the Judgment Day. ¹³ What horrors await you, you cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida! For if the miracles I did for you had been done in the cities of Tyre and Sidon, their people would have sat in deep repentance long ago, clothed in sackcloth and throwing ashes on their heads to show their remorse. (TLB)

It appears from the above references that Israel and Judah slipped lower and lower into sin. They seemed to excel in almost every kind of sin one can imagine. Didn't God realize this would happen back when He chose their ancestor Abraham? Of course He did! But this should teach us that God didn't choose Israel because they would be the most righteous people around as many have assumed. Is it possible that God chose them because they would best illustrate the truth about Him in light of the great controversy and the accusations Satan had made about His character and government? This might include even choosing them because they would illustrate best the terrible consequences of sin! Or perhaps they would best illustrate the consequences of gross immorality and idolatry on the one hand and then later the terrible curse of legalism and pride on the other.

17. Considering all that God has said about them why does God finally restore Judah? (Ezekiel 36:22-38)

This is a very important passage and represents one of the major lessons that we need to learn from the Scripture: **The great controversy is not about us or even about how God saves us.** It is clear from looking at us and also from reading Scripture (1 Kings 8:46; 2 Chronicles 6:36; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:23) that we are all sinners. There is no argument between God and the Devil about that! If we are honest, we also know that we are all sinners. **The real argument is about whether God can be trusted.** Satan has claimed that God is an "arbitrary, exacting, vengeful, unforgiving and severe tyrant and liar". It would be totally foolish to trust such a person if these accusations were true. But how are we to determine if they are true or not? God recognizes that we have no way of "investigating" the truth about Him unless He chooses to reveal Himself to us. That is the purpose of all of Scripture. In fact, the whole universe has heard Satan's accusations against God, and there can never be peace and harmony in the universe until those accusations have been clearly and unequivocally answered to everyone's satisfaction. That is why we read in Romans 3:4 that God has "taken His case into court".

There would be no reason even to discuss whether God can save you and me if these much more important and more basic questions were not answered. Thus it is of paramount importance for God to say something about His name. The whole history of our world is tied up in God's answering the accusations that Satan has brought against Him in the great controversy. Even the creation of this world was in partial response to Satan's accusations that God is not willing to share His creative power.

Even in the eyes of His children here on this world God must "be shown to be right" in all of His dealings. (Romans 3:4) When God's special people—the ones recognized as bearing His name and who were supposed to represent Him to the whole world—misbehaved so seriously that it made even the surrounding nations raise questions about God's own ability to do anything for them, it was time for Yahweh to do something urgently. (See #5,6,8 above)

18. Is it true that God took them by stages into captivity in hopes that the remnant might repent and not have to go? Much of the trouble they got into was because of the priests, rulers and even prophets (Jeremiah 23:1-4; 16; 21). How do you think the people were supposed to distinguish between these false prophets and Jeremiah the true prophet? Compare Jeremiah 23:25-40. Do we hear such claims today?

It is very significant to notice that the first time Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem he took with him only a few of the very best (including Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah) young people of royal birth and some priests. On the next conquest he took Ezekiel and about ten thousand of the

most prominent people. Finally, he had become so disgusted with their rebellion that on the third visit he took almost everyone to Babylon.

It seems that Nebuchadnezzar had planned to just take the few that were taken with Daniel in the beginning. If the others had followed the instruction of men like Jeremiah and humbly submitted to the direction of Nebuchadnezzar and the leaders that he appointed, no further damage would have been done to the people or the city. But they were so sure that God was speaking through all these false prophets and priests that they believed that it was just a matter of a short time until Yahweh would return and bless their city and give them their sovereignty back. (See Jeremiah 28)

19. If God gave an examination over the most important key ideas of the Old Testament, would you pass?

This is primarily a thought question, but in light of what we have seen in this teacher's guide it should be clear that many very significant ideas that are an essential part of the Scripture are largely ignored by many scholars.

It is particularly apparent in Ezekiel that the issue in God's dealing with the Jews was much larger than just what might have been good for the Jews themselves. God was "on trial" before the universe in His handling of things here on planet earth. Not that we have any right to force God into court, but God takes Himself into court (Romans 3:4) in order to demonstrate clearly what the most important points in the great controversy are.

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info@theox.org

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Ellen White Quotes

For centuries God looked with patience and forbearance upon the cruel treatment given to his ambassadors, at his holy law prostrate, despised, trampled underfoot. He swept away the inhabitants of the Noachian world with a flood. But when the earth was again peopled, men drew away from God, and renewed their hostility to him, manifesting bold defiance. Those whom God rescued from Egyptian bondage followed in the footsteps of those who had preceded them. Cause was followed by effect; the earth was being corrupted.

A crisis had arrived in the government of God...All heaven was prepared at the word of God to move to the help of his elect. One word from him, and the bolts of heaven would have fallen upon the earth, filling it with fire and flame. God had but to speak, and there would have been thunderings and lightnings and earthquakes and destruction.

The heavenly intelligences were prepared for a fearful manifestation of Almighty power. Every move was watched with intense anxiety. The exercise of justice was expected. The angels looked for God to punish the inhabitants of the earth..."

"The heavenly universe was amazed at God's patience and love. To save fallen humanity the Son of God took humanity upon himself." *Review and Herald*, July 17, 1900; (4RH 201:1:4-201:2:1) compare DA 37