

Ezek. 11:1 Moreover the spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of the LORD'S house, which looketh eastward: and behold at the door of the gate five and twenty men; among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people.

As Ezekiel's vision continues, he is lifted up by the spirit and taken to the eastern gate of the temple that faces east. At the door of the temple are 25 men that I would assume to be the same ones referenced in 8:16. Two of the men are specifically identified since Ezekiel must recognize them. This Jaazaniah is a different one from the one leading the group of 70 in idol worship referenced in 8:11. As noted in chapter 8, it would seem logical to conclude that these men are priests, the men entrusted with the spiritual leadership of the people.

Ezek. 11:2 Then said he unto me, Son of man, these *are* the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city:

Ezek. 11:3 Which say, *It is not near*; let us build houses: this *city is the caldron*, and we *be* the flesh.

Ezek. 11:4 Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man.

The Lord identifies these men as the principal leaders that are giving the people of the city advice that contradicts God's message. The wording of the NLT was much clearer for verse 3.

They say to the people, 'Is it not a good time to build houses? Our city is like an iron pot. Inside it we will be like meat—safe from all harm.'

We know that Jeremiah is prophesying at this time as well, and he is delivering God's message of judgment to come. These men are refuting the prophet of God and telling the people that they will be safe in Jerusalem.

Ezekiel is told to prophesy against these men.

Ezek. 11:5 And the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the LORD; Thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for I know the things that come into your mind, *every one of them*.

Now the Lord gives Ezekiel the prophecy he is to declare. First, he identifies Himself as YHWH, the self-existent eternal God, their Creator, the One who knows every thought that crosses their minds. (cf comments at 8:12)

Ezek. 11:6 Ye have multiplied your slain in this city, and ye have filled the streets thereof with the slain.

Ezek. 11:7 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Your slain whom ye have laid in the midst of it, they *are* the flesh, and this *city is the caldron*: but I will bring you forth out of the midst of it.

The Lord is declaring His people guilty of the deaths of those who lost their lives due to the wicked practices they had learned in association with their worship of idols. They had rejected Him and had lost their moral compass.

I believe America is reaping the same consequences for our own rejection of the Lord. In the name of freedom and tolerance we have pushed the Lord out of our schools, our government and our courts. As a result, there is no clear moral compass because we have rejected the only moral foundation—God's word. When man makes "moral" choices without reference to God, acceptable behavior

is determined more and more by the desires of the individual without respect for one another. It is becoming more and more like the scripture describes the days of Israel before they had a king—every man does what is right in his own eyes (Judges 17:6). That type of attitude is described in scripture as that of a fool.

Prov. 12:15 The way of a fool *is* right in his own eyes:
Allowed to continue on that path, society will become like that described in the days of Noah.

Gen. 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.

The only *bodies* that are going to be “safe” in Jerusalem are those that are already dead at the hands of their own people. Those who are left to experience God’s judgment will be taken captive.

Ezek. 11:8 Ye have feared the sword; and I will bring a sword upon you, saith the Lord GOD.

Ezek. 11:9 And I will bring you out of the midst thereof, and deliver you into the hands of strangers, and will execute judgments among you.

Ezek. 11:10 Ye shall fall by the sword; I will judge you in the border of Israel; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

Throughout much of Israel’s history as a nation, they had feared attack from their enemies. The thing they have feared the most will become a reality. God is clear that He is going to give His people to the enemy in judgment of their sin. Many of them will be killed and not even given the opportunity to live in captivity.

Ezek. 11:11 This *city* shall not be your caldron, neither shall ye be the flesh in the midst thereof; *but* I will judge you in the border of Israel:

Ezek. 11:12 And ye shall know that I *am* the LORD: for ye have not walked in my statutes, neither executed my judgments, but have done after the manners of the heathen that *are* round about you.

The walled city of Jerusalem will not be adequate to protect them. God has declared judgment, and they will be caused to know that HE IS GOD. There is a verse in Psalms that applies here.

Psa. 9:16 The LORD is known *by* the judgment *which* he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.

Again, He makes clear that their judgment is the consequence of rejecting Him and disobeying His laws and choosing to live like the heathen around them that serve impotent, false gods.

I think it is important to note that we can secure ourselves with the best technology and careful planning and preparation, but there is no defense on earth that can thwart the purposes of God. When He declares judgment, He ensures that it is implemented.

Ezek. 11:13 And it came to pass, when I prophesied, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then fell I down upon my face, and cried with a loud voice, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?

This is confusing because Ezekiel is experiencing a vision. In that vision he prophesies as instructed. He then sees one of the 25 men fall dead after the prophecy. Ezekiel responds with great grief because he loves his nation and his people. He takes this as a sign that the Lord is going to destroy the nation. He has evidently forgotten the fact that the Lord marked a remnant of the faithful for preservation.

Ezek. 11:14 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Ezek. 11:15 Son of man, thy brethren, even thy brethren, the men of thy kindred, and all the house of Israel wholly, *are they unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, Get you far from the LORD: unto us is this land given in possession.*

The NLT again expresses the thought more clearly.

“Son of man, the people still left in Jerusalem are talking about their relatives in exile, saying, ‘They are far away from the LORD, so now he has given their land to us!’

Those who had been taken captive already, of whom Ezekiel was a part, were considered to be the wicked ones that were experiencing God’s judgment. Those still left in the land believed that to be a sign that they were safe.

As is often done today, the people assessed circumstances incorrectly as evidence of God’s approval or disapproval. Things aren’t always what they appear to be. Job’s friends assumed he must have angered God to be in the condition he was in. Success in ministry is not always proven by huge numbers and material wealth. Most of the prophets had very limited response to their message and were not wealthy by the world’s standards. Most of the apostles experienced great hardship and suffering and ended up as martyrs. Ministries that become large and are financially prosperous are much more susceptible to the deceit of the enemy and becoming like the church of Laodicea:

Rev. 3:15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

Rev. 3:16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

Rev. 3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

We need to be oh so careful to seek God’s will through His word and the leading of His Spirit to ensure that our plans and purposes are in accordance with His. We also need to be very careful about making quick judgments based on circumstance.

Ezek. 11:16 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come.

God specifically rejects their assessment of the situation. He is the One that brought about the captivity of those in Babylon and other countries, but He has done it to protect them. They are the ones that will have the opportunity of benefiting from the refining fire of judgment. God will provide them protection

as they turn to Him in faith. He is not limited to earthly boundaries. Ezekiel's vision has made it clear that the Lord is no longer a sanctuary for the people in Israel because He is leaving it for the time being.

Ezek. 11:17 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.

The time is coming, however, when God is going to regather His people from all the countries to which they have been scattered. Israel will again possess the land of Israel as God promised to Abraham.

Ezek. 11:18 And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence.

When the people return, they will cleanse the land of all the things that were associated with the worship of false gods.

Ezek. 11:19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:

Ezek. 11:20 That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

These verses are significant in determining the actual time being referenced. When the Lord regathers His people, He will "give them one heart." In other words, they will be unified in their response to Him. He will also "put a new spirit within them." No longer will they respond to Him with a hard stubborn heart; they will respond with a soft repentant submissive heart. At that time they will obey Him and will acknowledge Him as their God.

Even though we know that the nation of Israel was reconstituted in part after the Babylonian exile, this is not an accurate description of how the nation responded to God upon their return to Israel. This description has never accurately described the nation. This is obviously referencing a time yet future. Neither Ezekiel nor the people probably understood this at the time of his prophecy, but our lack of understanding never changes the truth. As was often the case, the prophet did not have a clear understanding of his prophecy. Ezekiel was speaking of the time at the end of the 70th week, the tribulation period yet to come, when the remnant of Israel will turn to God in faith and obedience never to rebel again. At that time, there will never again be a Jewish person that rejects his/her Lord. This was the truth referenced by the Apostle Paul.

Rom. 11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

Rom. 11:27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

Ezek. 11:21 But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord GOD.

Those, however, who choose to reject God and follow their man-made idols and act wickedly will be judged accordingly. It's the law of reaping and sowing.

Job 4:8 Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

Gal. 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Gal. 6:8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

Ezek. 11:22 Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel *was* over them above.

Ezek. 11:23 And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which *is* on the east side of the city.

At this point Ezekiel sees the throne of God lifted by the cherubims to the top of the Mount of Olives. It's interesting that the Lord removed Himself from the city, but He is still in a position of oversight.

Ezek. 11:24 Afterwards the spirit took me up, and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the captivity. So the vision that I had seen went up from me.

Ezek. 11:25 Then I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that the LORD had shewed me.

Finally, Ezekiel is taken back by the spirit to the land of Chaldea. The vision has ended. Evidently the Lord looses Ezekiel's tongue at this point to share what he had seen with the elders that were sitting with him (cf 8:1).

This message obviously was not meant to impact those in Jerusalem who would be directly affected by the coming judgment. It was intended to declare the truth to God's people in captivity in Babylon that He is in control and working on behalf of His people. There is hope for the future. Just as surely as He is carrying out judgment, He will fulfill His promise to bring them to a place of blessing and fellowship from which they will never again be separated.

Scripture declares that prophecy is a unique proof of His truth and authority.

Is. 42:8 I *am* the LORD: that *is* my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

Is. 42:9 Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.

Is. 48:5 I have even from the beginning declared *it* to thee; before it came to pass I shewed *it* thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.