

## Make Way for the King of Babylon

### EXEGESIS OF VERSES 18 – 20:

#### VERSE EIGHTEEN

“And the word of Yahweh came to me saying...”

וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר

(conj. ו/w "and" + verb-qal-imperf-3rd-m-s [waw consec] הָיָה/hayah "It came about" + noun-m-s const. דְבַר/dabar "word of..." + proper noun יְהוָה/yhwh "Yahweh" + prep w/ suf-1st-c-s. אֵל/el "unto me" prep. ל/L [untranslated] + verb-qal-inf. const. אָמַר/amar "saying").

#### VERSE NINETEEN

“And you, son of man, appoint yourself two ways for the sword of the king of Babylon to go. Both of them will come forth from one land. Then prepare a hand, at the head of the way of the city prepare it”.

וְאַתָּה בֶן־אָדָם שִׁים־לָךְ שְׁנַיִם דְּרוֹכִים לְבוֹא חֶרֶב  
מִלְּךָ־בְּבֶל מֵאֶרֶץ אֶחָד יֵצְאוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם וְיָד בְּרֹאשׁ  
דֶּרֶךְ־עִיר בְּרֹאשׁ

(conj. ו/w “and” + prn-2nd-m-s אַתָּה/’attah “you” + noun-m-s const. בֶּן/ben “son of...” + noun-m-s אָדָם/’adam “man” + verb-qal-imper-m-s שִׁים/siyim “place/appoint” + prep. w/ suf-2nd-m-s ל/L “for yourself” + adj-m-pl שְׁנַיִם/shenayim “two” + noun-f-p. דֶּרֶךְ/derek “ways” + prep. ל/L “to” + verb-qal inf. Const. בּוֹא/bo’ “go” + noun-f-s const. חֶרֶב/chereb “sword of...” + noun-m-s const. מִלְּךָ/melech “king of...” + proper noun בְּבֶל/babel “Babylon” + prep. מִן/min “from” + noun-f-s אֶרֶץ/’erets “land” + adj-m-s אֶחָד/’echad “one” + verb-qal-imperf-3rd-m-p. יֵצְאוּ/yatsah “will come forth” + adj-m-p. w/ suff-3rd-m-p. שְׁנַיִם/shenayim “their two” + conj. ו/w “and” + noun-f-s יָד/yad “hand” + verb-piel-inf. absolute” + בְּרֹאשׁ/bara’ “prepare” + prep. ב/B “at” + noun-m-s const. רֹאשׁ/ro’sh “head of...” + noun-f-s const. דֶּרֶךְ/derek “way of...” + noun-f-s עִיר/’iyir “city” + verb-piel inf. Abs. בְּרֹאשׁ/bara’ “to prepare”).

VERSE TWENTY

**“You will appoint a way for the sword to go to Rabbah, to the sons of Ammon, and to Judah into fortified Jerusalem”**

בִּירוּשָׁלַם בְּצוּרָה דֶרֶךְ תָּשִׂים לְבוֹא חֶרֶב אֶת רַבַּת בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹן וְאֶת־יְהוּדָה

(noun-f-s דֶרֶךְ/derek "way/road" + verb-qal-imperf-2nd-m-s תָּשִׂים/siym "you will set" + prep. ל/L "to" + verb-qal-inf. const. לְבוֹא/bo' "go" + noun-f-s חֶרֶב/chereb "sword" + sign d.o. אֶת/eth [untranslated] + proper noun רַבַּת/rabbah "Rabbah" + noun-m-p.const. בְּנֵי/ben "sons of..." + proper noun עַמּוֹן/‘ammon "Ammon" + conj. ו/w "and" + sign d.o. אֶת/eth [untranslated] + proper noun יְהוּדָה/yehudah "Judah" + prep. ב/B "into" + proper noun יְרוּשָׁלַם/yerushalam "Jerusalem" + adj-f-s בְּצוּרָה/batsur "fortified").

**ANALYSIS OF VERSES 18 – 20:**

1. Having given the parable of the polished sword, Ezekiel now receives instruction as to how the sword will arrive in Jerusalem and communicate it to them by way of another sign act.
2. He states in verse eighteen, **“And the word of Yahweh came to me saying...”**
3. This is the same familiar introduction to divine communication that we have seen time and time again in the book of Ezekiel.
4. There is no reference to or indication of how much time has passed since the previous communication, probably a week or two???
5. He delivers the parable and then lets them ponder it. He is not able to say anything else to them. This communication will make clear that the polished sword is wielded by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.
6. We are still in the middle of the seventh year of the imprisonment of King Jehoiachin.
7. He continues in the first clause of verse nineteen, **“And you, son of man, appoint yourself two ways for the sword of the king of Babylon to go. Both of them will come forth from one land...”**
8. As previously stated, herein begins yet another sign act. Ezekiel is to make two roads or paths for the King of Babylon to bring his sword.
9. It is not stated how, exactly he is to do this. Perhaps dig up two paths in the dirt.
10. He is thus to make a road and then allow it to divide or come to a fork so to speak. Such will represent two choices for the king to travel. Which one will he choose?
11. Note that Yahweh states that both of these roads will come from the same land. That “land” is Babylon. He travels due west, probably along the Euphrates River then south toward Judah.

12. Next Yahweh instructs Ezekiel in the final clause of verse nineteen, “... **Then prepare a hand, at the head of the way of the city prepare it**”.
13. How exactly does he “prepare a hand”? The NASB states that he is to “make a signpost”. However our Hebrew noun is feminine, singular, יָד/yad, “hand”.
14. The hand he is to produce is his own, one which points the way to the road he is to take.
15. As was the case in our previous mock up scene, Ezekiel represents God in the sign act (Ezek. 4:1ff).
16. As the Babylonian “sword” makes its way to the fork in the road, Ezekiel is to point them toward the way that leads to Judah and Jerusalem.
17. Such represents God working behind the scenes to guide Nebuchadnezzar in the way He wants him to go. Remember that Nebuchadnezzar in God’s servant (Jeremiah 25:8, 9; 27:6; 43:10).
18. It is as if a giant hand has its index finger pointing the way, “go this way to Jerusalem!
19. We will see in the next section that Nebuchadnezzar uses divination to determine which way to go. God will see to it that all three examples of divination point the way to Jerusalem.
20. Yahweh continues in verse twenty where He states, “**You will appoint a way for the sword to go to Rabbah, to the sons of Ammon, and to Judah into fortified Jerusalem**”
21. Hence two roads branch off in different directions: one to Judah, one to Ammon.
22. Which way will the sword be directed by the pointing hand? To Jerusalem of course!
23. However there is an alternative destination on the map, that of Rabbah in Ammon.
24. Rabbah was the capital of Ammon where the royal palace existed (Deut. 3:11; II Sam. 12:26; Amos. 1:14, 15).
25. Why, one may ask, would Nebuchadnezzar want to Rabbah, a city in Ammon?
26. The answer is that Ammon too is on his list of countries to dismantle. However he will choose to deal with Judah first, then swing around to Ammon.
27. Ammon was considered to be one of Israel’s arch enemies.
28. At the time she had entered into a confederacy with Egypt in the same way Judah had (Walvoord & Zuck, p. 1268).
29. Hence Nebuchadnezzar has a choice to make as to which nation he should deal with first.
30. His choice is to head down the coastal highway and attack Judah and Jerusalem or to head down the Transjordan and attack Ammon (ibid).
31. God will ensure that he makes Judah his number one priority as we shall see in the next section.

**EXEGESIS OF VERSE 21:**VERSE TWENTY-ONE

**“For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the way, at the fork of two roads to use divination. He has shaken the arrow, he has inquired of the idols, he has looked into the liver”.**

כִּי־עָמַד מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל אֶל־אֵם הַדֶּרֶךְ בְּרֹאשׁ שְׁנֵי הַדֶּרְכִים  
לְקַס־קָסָם קָלָקַל בַּחֲצִים שָׁאֵל בַּתְּרָפִים רָאָה בְּכַבֵּד

conj. כִּי/kiy "for" + verb-qal-perf-3rd-m-s עָמַד/‘amad "he stands" + noun-m-s const. מֶלֶךְ/  
melek "king of..." + proper noun בָּבֶל/babel "Babylon" + prep. אֶל/’el "unto" + noun-f-s  
const. אֵם/’em "parting of.." + noun-f-s w/ d.a. הַדֶּרֶךְ/derek "the way" + prep. ב "at" + noun-  
m-s const. רֹאשׁ/ro’sh "head of..." + adj-m-pl שְׁנַיִם/shaniyim "two" + noun-f-pl w/ d.a. הַדֶּרֶךְ/  
derek "the roads" + prep. ל/L "to" + verb-qal-inf. const. קָסָם/qasam "divine" + noun-m-s  
קָסָם/qesem "divination" + verb-pilpel-perfect-3rd-m-s [pilpel is a variation of the piel stem]  
לְקָלָל/qalal "he has shaken" + prep. ב/B "unto" + noun-m-pl w/ d.a. חֲצִיִּים/chets "the arrows" +  
verb-qal-perf-3rd-m-s שָׁאֵל/sha’al "he has inquired of" + prep. ב/B "in" + noun-m-pl w/  
d.a. תְּרָפִים/teraphiym "the idols" + verb-qal-perf-3rd-m-s רָאָה/ra’ah "he has looked" + prep.  
ב/B "into" + noun-f-s w/ d.a. כַּבֵּד/kabed "the liver").

**ANALYSIS OF VERSE 21:**

1. We now see the reality behind Ezekiel’s mock up of the fork in the road and sign post in the previous section.
2. However we now learn something that was not communicated in the previous section.
3. Here in verse twenty-one Yahweh states **“For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the way, at the fork of two roads to use divination....”**

4. Apparently, Nebuchadnezzar and his generals were at a loss as to which country they should attack first, Judah or Ammon.
5. To answer their dilemma, they turn to their pagan religious practices, seeking to get an answer from the gods.
6. Realize that Yahweh is going to work behind the scenes so as to manipulate each of the three methods used, so as to ensure that Nebuchadnezzar makes his way to Jerusalem.
7. Yahweh is thus represented as Ezekiel pointing the way to Jerusalem in the mock up in the previous verses. God is telling Nebuchadnezzar, though he is a pagan, "Go to Jerusalem!!!"
8. We learn in the second part of verse twenty-one that Nebuchadnezzar uses three separate methods of paganism to discern which way he is to go.
9. Yahweh states **He has shaken the arrow, he has inquired of the idols, he has looked into the liver**".
10. Note that all of the verbs are in the perfect, thus indicating completed action. Hence this is a future prediction of an act that has been completed.
11. Ezekiel presents the king as having completed three different acts of divination and as a result stands firm in his new found decision.
12. The first example is of shaking the arrows or belomancy. Such refers to a form of drawing straws so to speak.
13. The pagan would write the name of various cities which he wanted to attack on the surface of arrows. He would then put the arrows back in the quiver, give it a good shake and then choose an arrow (like drawing a name out of hat).
14. The name on that arrow is the one which he would attack first.
15. We find this kind of process used in various instances in the Bible (Psa. 22:18; Obad. 1:11; Jon. 1:7).
16. While people may think they are contacting deities, God is in charge and allows things to fall as He wishes (Prov. 16:33).
17. The second example has to do with his idols here called **תְּרַפִּיִּם**/teraphim in the Hebrew. Teraphim were "household gods" which were often used for divination (I Sam 15:23; II Kings 23:24; Ezek 21:21; Zech 10:2).
18. We do not know how specifically this occurred. However while he used observation in the other two forms of paganism, here is said to "inquire of" the idols.
19. Our word for "inquire" is the qal, perfect of **שָׁאַל**/sha'al, "to ask, inquire, request".
20. "In its OT usage shā'al signifies "to ask" something of someone, whether the request be an asking for some physical object (Exo 3:22) or for some information, (Gen 32:17 [H 18]) or whether it be in the form of a demand for another's death (Job 31:30), the demand made by a superior upon an inferior (Job 38:3), or the begging petition of a suppliant (Prov 20:4). It may denote asking a favor for temporary use (Exo 22:14 [H 13]), or in a weakened sense, "to seek, desire" (Eccl 2:10). The accusative of either the person asked

or the object requested normally follows, and sometimes both” (Harris, Archer & Waltke, p. 891).

21. Hence while the arrows are manipulated, shaken, and the liver is observed, the idols are asked or inquired of. Again, no mention is made of how, specifically, this went down.
22. However they were used in some fashion to contact demons to get an answer to a question (Zech. 10:2).
23. Teraphim are differentiated in Scripture from the other idols people worshipped (II Kings 23:24).
24. Rachel is said to have stolen her father, Laban’s household gods and then sat on them to conceal them, indicating that they were small figurines as opposed to a large statue (Gen. 31:19-35 – note that Laban calls them his ‘gods’).
25. Having shaken the arrows and consulted the teraphim, Nebuchadnezzar then turns to a third and final method of paganism to find an answer to his question.
26. This time he is said to have “looked into the liver”. This is a ritual called hepatoscopy whereby an animal was killed and its liver taken out. A shaman or magi would then observe it and pass judgment as to what the omen means.
27. Taylor notes that this was a “common feature of Babylonian divination and it was carried over into ancient Rome as well” (p. 162).
28. Obviously, all forms of divination used here are strictly forbidden in Scripture (Deut. 18:10).

## EXEGESI OF VERSES 22 & 23:

### VERSE TWENTY-TWO

**“The divination came into his right hand, Jerusalem, to place battering rams, to open the mouth of slaughter, to lift the voice of the battle cry, to set battering rams upon the gates, to pour out a siege ramp, to build a siege wall”.**

בִּימֵינוּ הָיָה הַקֶּסֶם יְרוּשָׁלַם לְשׁוֹם כְּרִים לְפִתַח פֶּה בְרָצַח  
 לְהָרִים קוֹל בְּתַרוּעָה לְשׁוֹם כְּרִים עַל־שַׁעֲרִים לְשַׁפֵּךְ  
 סִלְלָה לְבָנוֹת דְּיִק

(prep. בּ "into" + noun-f-s w/ suf-3rd-m-s יָמִיין/yamiyn "his right hand" + verb-qal-perf-3rd-m-s הָיָה/hayah "it came" + noun-m-s const. w/ d.a. קֶסֶם/qesem "the divination" + proper noun יְרוּשָׁלַם/yerushalam "Jerusalem" + prep. ל/L "to" + verb-qal-inf. const. שִׁים/siyim "place" + noun-m-p. כָּר/ka "rams" + prep. ל/L "to" + verb-qal-inf. const. פָּתַח/patach "open" + noun-m-s פֶּה/peh "mouth" + prep. בּ/B "into" + noun-m-s רָצַח/retsach "shattering" + prep. ל/L "to" + verb-hiph-inf. const. רָם/ram "lift" + noun-m-s קוֹל/qol

"voice" + prep. ב/B "into" + noun-f-s תִּירוּעָה/tiru'ah "alarm" + prep. ל/L "to" + verb-qal-inf. const. שִׁימ/siyim "set" + noun-m-pl כָּר/kar "rams" + prep. עַל/al "upon" + noun-m-pl שַׁעַר/sa'ar "gates" + prep. ל/L "to" + verb-qal-inf. const. שֹׁפֵךְ/shaphak "heap" + noun-f-s סִלְלָה/sol'lah "a siege mound" + prep. ל/L "to" + verb-qal-inf. const. בָּנָה/banah "build" + noun-m-s דָּיֵק/dayeq "a wall").

### VERSE TWENTY-THREE

**“And it will seem like a false divination in the eyes of those who have sworn an oath to them, but he will remember the iniquity so as to take them into captivity”.**

וְהָיָה לָהֶם (פְּקָסוֹם־) [פְּקָסוֹם־] שׂוּא בְּעֵינֵיהֶם שְׁבַעֵי שְׁבַעוֹת  
לָהֶם וְהוּא־מִזְכִּיר עֹן לְהִתְפַּשׂ פ

(conj. ו/w "and" + verb-qal-perf-3rd-m-s [waw consec] הָיָה/hayah "it will be" + prep. w/ suf-3rd-m-pl ל/L "to them" + prep. כ/k "like" + verb-qal-inf. const. קָסָם/qesem "a divination" + noun-m-s שׂוּא/shawe' "emptiness/falsehood" + prep. ב/B "in" + noun-f-pl w/ suf-3rd-m-pl עֵינַי/ayin "their eyes" verb-qal-pass. part-m-pl const. שְׁבַע/shaba' "those who have sworn" + noun-f-pl const. שְׁבֻעָה/sh'bu'ah "an oath" + prep.w/ suf-3rd-m-pl ל/L "to them" + conj. ו/w "but" + pron-3rd-m-s הוּא/hu' "he" + verb-hiph-part-m-s זָכַר/zakar "remember" + noun-f-s עֹן/aon "iniquity" prep. ל/L "to" + verb-niph-inf. const. תִּפְשׂ/taphas "lay hold of").

### ANALYSIS OF VERSES 22 & 23:

1. The scene continues in verse twenty-two whereby Nebuchadnezzar is said to have received the meaning and interpretation of the three acts of divination.
2. Yahweh states that **“The divination came into his right hand, Jerusalem...”**
3. The right hand is the dominant hand for over 90% of the people who live on the earth.
4. Hence for it to come to his right hand indicates power, control and acceptance of the message to use it for his own good.
5. What is said of Jerusalem? That is the city **“...to place battering rams, to open the mouth of slaughter, to lift the voice of the battle cry, to set battering rams upon the gates to pour out a siege ramp, to build a siege wall”.**
6. In view is that of a siege. As was the case in chapter four, Yahweh is communicating to Ezekiel, who is then to communicate to the dispersed Israelites, that the city will be put under a long arduous siege.
7. Battering rams will be used to break through the gates and smash through the city walls.
8. These rams were composed of tree trunks or large wooden beams with iron at the tip.

9. Men would use ropes to swing these beams, tied to a frame to swing the rams back and forth like a pendulum. Over time, the walls would give way to the constant battering of the heavy weight.
10. The men of the Babylonian army will let out a loud war cry so as to frighten and intimidate those who think they have found lasting shelter within the walled city.
11. Siege ramps will be built so as to aid in overcoming the benefits of the city walls.
12. They will also build a siege wall around the city to both protect them from being attacked from the outside and to discourage people from escape.
13. He continues in verse twenty-three, **“And it will seem like a false divination in the eyes of those who have sworn an oath to them...”**
14. The immediate question is “who is it who has sworn an oath?”
15. The answer is that of the Israelites who are currently residing the southern kingdom of Judah. It is not in reference to the Israelites in Babylon. They were carted off prior to said oath going into effect.
16. They have taken an oath with Nebuchadnezzar to be his loyal vassal state.
17. However why does the divination seem “false”? They are in the process of rebellion and have sought out Egypt as an ally against Babylon. Of course there is going to be a response from Nebuchadnezzar!
18. Perhaps they do not realize that Nebuchadnezzar has found out about their treason.
19. Realize too that the Jews of this time period have been propagandized by false prophets into believing that this attack is not going to occur (Ezek. 11:2, 3; 13:9; 22:28; Jer. 14:14ff).
20. Hence the divinations for a time seem to be false. No way would Nebuchadnezzar attack them!!!
21. However he divination was correct as God is manipulating it for His own good. There was a reason that Nebuchadnezzar needed to go to Jerusalem first, and it makes sense to him once the three forms of divination point him in that direction.
22. Yahweh next tells Ezekiel, **“...he will remember the iniquity so as to take them into captivity”**.
23. The “iniquity” in view is that of the breaking of the oath that Zedekiah made with Nebuchadnezzar and then leading a rebellion against him (Ezek. 17:15-19).
24. Nebuchadnezzar placed Zedekiah on the throne and had him take an oath of loyalty to the King of Babylon (II Chronicles 36:10-7; Jer. 52:3).
25. When Nebuchadnezzar contemplates this, it then makes sense why Jerusalem should be dealt with first. In his eyes, she has the greater sin.
26. However Yahweh Elohiym is the one who is working behind the scenes to ensure, using divination, that the Babylonians will indeed precede directly to Jerusalem.
27. Hence God is the one pointing the finger to Jerusalem as she is ripe for the 5<sup>th</sup> cycle of discipline (Ezek. 21:19).



**EXEGESIS OF VERSES 24 & 25:**

**“Therefore thus says Adonay Yahweh, ‘because you caused your iniquity to be remembered in that it was uncovered in your rebellion, your sins being seen in all of your deeds. Because you have come to be remembered you are going to be caught by the hand”.**

לְכֵן כִּתְּבוּ אֶת־אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה יַעַן הִזְכַּרְתֶּם עֲוֹנוֹתֵיכֶם בְּהַגְלוֹת

פְּשִׁיעֵיכֶם לְהִרְאוֹת חַטּוֹתֵיכֶם בְּכֹל עֲלִילוֹתֵיכֶם יַעַן  
הִזְכַּרְתֶּם בְּכַף תַּחֲפָשׁוּ פ

(prep. ל/L [untranslated] + adv. כֵּן/ken "therefore" + adv. כֹּה/koh "thus" + verb-qal-perf-3rd-m-s אָמַר/'amar "says" + proper noun אֲדֹנָי/adonay יהוה/yhwh "Adonay Yahweh" + adv. יַעַן/ya'an "because" + verb-hiph-inf. const. זָכַר/zakar "causing to remember" + noun-f-s const. w/ suf-2nd-m-pl עֲוֹן/'aon "your iniquity" + prep. ב/B "in" + verb-niph-inf. const. גָּלָה/galah "being uncovered" + noun-m-p. w/ suf-2nd-m-pl פָּשַׁע/pasha' "your rebellion" + prep. ל/L "to" + verb-niph-inf. const. רָאָה/ra'ah "being seen" + noun-f-pl const. w/ suf-2nd-m-pl. חַטּוֹת/chata'th "your sins" + prep. ב/B "in" + noun-m-s const. כֹּל/kol "all..." + noun-f-pl w/ suf-2nd-m-pl עֲלֵי־לָה/aliylah "your deeds" + prep. יַעַן/ya'an "because" + verb-niph-inf. w/ suf-2nd-m-pl זָכַר/zakar "you are being remembered" + prep. ב/B "in" + noun-f-s w/ d.a. כַּף/kaph "the palms" + verb-niph-imperf-2nd-m-pl תַּחֲפָשׁ/taphas "you are being caught").

#### VERSE TWENTY-FIVE

**“And you O slain, wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come in the time of the iniquity of the end”.**

קַץ ס וְאַתָּה חָלָל רָשָׁע נָשִׂיא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר-בָּא יוֹמוֹ בְּעֵת עֲוֹן

(conj. ו "and" + pron-2nd-m-s אַתָּה/attah "you" + adj-m-s חָלָל/chalal "wounded" + adj-m-s רָשָׁע/rasha' "wicked" + noun-m-s const. נָשִׂיא/nasiy' "prince of..." + proper noun יִשְׂרָאֵל/yisra'el "Israel" + rel pron אֲשֶׁר/asher "to whom" + verb-qal-perf-3rd-m-s בּוֹא/bo' "it has come" + noun-m-s w/ suf-3rd-m-s "his day" + prep. ב/B "in" + noun-f-s const. עֵת/eth "time of..." + noun-f-s const. עֲוֹן/'aon "iniquity of..." + noun-m-s קֵץ/qets "end").

#### **ANALYSIS OF VERSES 24 & 25:**

1. Yahweh continues to make reference to Nebuchadnezzar's advance against the southern kingdom of Judah in verse twenty-four.
2. Recall that the previous section featured Nebuchadnezzar remembering the iniquity of the Jews and pledging to take them captive.
3. Here He elaborates where it is stated **“Therefore thus says Adonay Yahweh, ‘because you caused your iniquity to be remembered in that it was uncovered in your rebellion, your sins being seen in all of your deeds....’”**
4. In other words, their actions have caught up with them. Though they might have seemed stealth in their rebellion against Babylon and forming and allegiance with Egypt, their sins have found them out.

5. Recall that they had taken a vow and that they had broken the vow. Well, actually the king had taken a vow. However the people are complicit with him.
6. Because the king used God's name in swearing to Nebuchadnezzar, he has sinned against God by breaking the covenant (Ezek. 17:13-19).
7. While this was done in stealth, it has come to ears of the king of Babylon and he will deal out retribution!
8. Obviously none of the people personally went about conducting these actions aside from the king and his advisors.
9. However the people are committing the kind sins to the degree that it is going to bring about judgment. Hence they are complicit in their evil schemes and way of life. There is no mention of the people sending a petition to Zedekiah to respect the treaty with Nebuchadnezzar!
10. Their ways are not merely being remembered by the Babylonians, but by Yahweh Elohiym who is sending the Babylonian army to them.
11. As a result of this, they are all going to be killed or taken into captivity, the king included. Yahweh states **"...Because you have come to be remembered you are going to be caught by the hand"**.
12. The king and his subjects alike will find themselves completely surrounded in the siege and will be taken into captivity.
13. The king will try to escape, but will be caught in the plains of Jericho and taken before the king who will pass sentence upon him (II Kings 25:1ff).
14. Yahweh focuses on Zedekiah specifically in verse twenty-five where He speaks directly to him stating **"And you O slain, wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come in the time of the iniquity of the end"**.
15. The "slain, wicked prince" is no other than King Zedekiah, who is never called a "king" in Ezekiel's book. Such is significant in that he was not truly in line to be king.
16. Indeed, he was the true king's uncle, who was placed on the throne as a regent vassal to serve the king of Babylon (II Kings 24:15-20).
17. He said to be "slain" here in this instance. Such does not refer to his death. He will live for years after being taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar.
18. Our word for "slain" is the masculine, singular adjective, חָלַל/chalal, "slain, wounded, profaned".
19. It can be used of those fatally wounded (Psa. 69:27).
20. However it can also mean merely to wound (Job 24:12).
21. It is also used of someone or something which has been defiled or profaned (Lev. 21:7).
22. While Zedekiah is not killed by Nebuchadnezzar, he is most assuredly wounded and arguably defiled at the same time as he has been given into the hands of the Gentiles.
23. Notice that he is also called a "wicked prince". Our word translated as "wicked" is the masculine, singular adjective, רָשָׁע/rasha', "Bad, evil, wicked, criminal".
24. While often used of unbelievers, such is not always the case. The adjective connotes people whose behavior is in contrast to the character and attitude God possesses (Exo 23:7; Job 9:22; Psa 37:28; Ezek 33:11; Mic 6:10).

25. Harris, Archer & Waltke note “Wicked people were guilty of violation of the social rights of others, for they were violent, oppressive, greedy, engaged in plotting against and trapping poor people, and quite willing to murder to gain their ends. In a word, they threatened the community. They were dishonest in business and in the courtroom. For examples see Exo 2:13; Num 35:31; 2Sam 4:11. 2Chronicles 19:2 notes that these people hate the Lord. Malachi 3:18 gives their refusal to serve the Lord as a major trait” (p. 863).
26. In the last days, more and more of these individuals will crop up. We see this increase of evil on a day-to-day basis (II Tim. 3:1ff).
27. These are traits that certainly applied to Zedekiah. He broke vows, worshipped demons, forsook the Law of God, was violent and led the country down a path of destruction.
28. However he will not do such things for long. He is now at the time of “the iniquity of the end”.
29. Our word for “iniquity” is feminine, singular noun, יָעוֹן /‘aon, “iniquity, guilt, punishment”.
30. While it can refer to the act of certain sins, often it is used as the result or discipline brought about by OSN behavior.
31. We could translate this as “the punishment of the end”. The punishment of the end speaks of the divine discipline that hits the individual so as to halt his OSN enterprises, it does not call for the SUD necessarily.
32. In other words, his unchecked OSN activity is getting to the end of the road where he will bring about DD and be the recipient of God’s *overruling will*. His day of judgment has come!
33. Remember this when you see the many wicked people in the world who are engrossed in all sorts of evil, to include those in government. Their day will come (Psa. 37:13; Luke 12:49)!

**EXEGESIS OF VERSES 26 & 27:**VERSE TWENTY-SIX

**“Thus says Adonay Yahweh, ‘Remove the turban and take off the crown. This is not going to be the same thing. That which is low will be exalted and that which is high will be made low’”.**

כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה הִסִיר הַמְצַנְפֶת וְהָרִים הָעֵטָרָה זֹאת  
לֹא-זֹאת הַשְּׁפָלָה הַגְּבִיחַ וְהַגְּבִיחַ הַשְּׁפִיל

(adv. כֹּה /koh "thus" + verb-qal-perf-3rd-m-s אָמַר /amar "says" + proper noun יְהוִה "Adonay Yahweh" verb-hiph-inf. const. סוּר /sur "turn aside" + noun-f-s w/ d.a. מְצַנְפֶת /mitsenepheth [12xs] "the turban" + conj. ו /w "and" + verb-hip-inf. const. רוּם /rum "raise up" + noun-f-s w/ d.a. עֵטָרָה /'atarah [24xs] "crown/diadem" + adj-f-s זֹאת /zo'th "this" + ne.g adv. לֹא /lo' "not" + to be verb [supplied] "to be" + adj-f-s זֹאת /zo'th "this/same" + adj-f-s w/ d.a. שְׁפָל /shaphal "that which is low" + to be verb [supplied] "will be" + verb-hiph-inf. abs + גְּבִיחַ /gabah "exalted" + conj. ו /w "and" + adj-m-s w/ d.a. גְּבִיחַ /gaboah "that which is high" + to be verb [supplied] "will be" + verb-hiph-inf. const. שְׁפָל /shaphal "make low").

VERSE TWENTY-SEVEN

**“A ruin, a ruin, a ruin I will make it. This also will be no more until He whose right it is comes, and I will give it to Him”**

הַמְשֻׁפָּט וְנִתְתִיּוֹעוּהָ עוֹהָ עוֹהָ אֲשִׁימְנָהּ גַם-זֹאת לֹא הִיָּה עַד-בֹּא אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ

(noun-f-s עוֹהָ /'awuah "a ruin" + noun-f-s עוֹהָ /'awuah "a ruin" + noun-f-s עוֹהָ /'awuah "a ruin" + verb-qal-imperf-1st c-s w/ suf-3rd-f-s שִׁימְ /siym "I will make it" + conj. גַּם /gam "also" + adj-f-s זֹאת /zo'th "this" + neg. adv. לֹא /lo' "not" + verb-qal-perf-3rd-m-s הָיָה /hayah "will continue" + prep. עַד /'ad "until" + verb-qal-inf. const. בֹּא /bo' "to come" + rel. pron. אֲשֶׁר /'asher "who" + prep. w/ suf-3rd-m-s ל /L "for him" + noun-m-s מְשֻׁפָּט /mishepat "judgment/right" + conj. ו /w "and" + verb-qal-perf-1st-c-s w/ suff-3rd-m-s [waw consec] נָתַן /nathan "I will give to him").

**ANALYSIS OF VERSES 26 & 27:**

1. Yahweh continues with his description of the slain wicked prince in mentioned in the previous section.
2. He states in verse twenty-six, **‘Remove the turban and take off the crown...’**
3. Our word for “turban” is the feminine, singular noun, מִצְנֵפֶת/mits<sup>e</sup>nepheth,
4. It is the word used for the turban which was worn by the high priest (Exod. 28:4, 37, 39; 29:6; 39:28, 31; Lev. 8:9; 16:4).
5. This is the only time the word is used outside of the Pentateuch.
6. There are other words for turban used in Scripture.
7. Job was said to wear a turban where the noun, צְנִיף/tsaniph, was used (Job 29:14).
8. Ezekiel himself also wore a turban where the noun, פֶּאֶר/peer, was used (Ezek. 24:17).
9. However מִצְנֵפֶת/mits<sup>e</sup>nepheth is only used of the turban worn by the high priest of Israel. Such is what is in view here.
10. Such demonstrates that the priesthood, which served in the temple, would be cut off.
11. This is exactly what happened. When Nebuchadnezzar invaded, he destroyed the temple thereby suspending the function of the priesthood (II Kings 25:8ff).
12. Note too that God demonstrates that the “crown” will be removed.
13. Our word for “crown” is the feminine, singular noun, עֵטָרָה/‘atarah, crown, wreath”.
14. While it can be used other contexts, this word is used for the crown a king would wear (II Sam. 12:30; Song. 3:11; Jer. 13:8).
15. In views is the crown of the fallen prince, who has been stripped of his crown. However it is not just Zedekiah who will lose the kingship. The nation of Israel will no longer have a king on the throne.
16. Yahweh continues in verse twenty-six, **“...This is not going to be the same thing. That which is low will be exalted and that which is high will be made low”**.
17. The nation will not continue along the same line they had functioned upon up to this point. The entire social order will be changed.
18. God states that that he is going to humble or bring down the high and mighty and raise up the humble.
19. God most assuredly humbled the royal family when Nebuchadnezzar took over the nation (II Kings 25:6; 25:27; Jer. 13:18; Lam. 5:16).
20. However in what sense did He elevate humble? The invasion will touch every life, both the righteous and the wicked (Ezek. 20:47; 21:3, 4).
21. The answer to our question lies in the fact that this is yet another warp speed prophecy which fast-forwards to the time of Christ’s return and the Millennium.
22. The proud being brought low and the humbled raised up is a common theme found throughout the Scriptures (Ezek. 17:24 cp. I Sam. 2:7; Psa. 113:7; Luke 1:52; 14:11; 18:14; I Pet. 5:5).
23. However the final application of this principle occurs during the Second Advent, when God keeps His promise to believers and those who are last become first and those first last (Matt. 19:30; Mark 9:35).

24. Believers from all three generations will rule in the Millennial Kingdom where all unbelievers will perish in Hades.
25. He continues in verses twenty-seven, **“A ruin, a ruin, a ruin I will make it...”**
26. Three times he repeats the feminine, singular noun, “ruin”, אָוֶה; /‘awuah, “ruin, rubble”.
27. It’s cognate verb, אָוָה /‘awah, means to bend or turn. Hence the noun holds the idea of something which has been over turned or turned upside down.
28. Hence there is an inversion of power and status whereby the authority of the priest and king have been overturned.
29. Repeating it three times demonstrates the certainty of the coming of this condition for Israel.
30. He continues in the final two clauses of verse twenty-seven, **“...This also will be no more until He whose right it is comes, and I will give it to Him”**
31. While the priesthood began to again function in the second commonwealth of Israel, never again was there a Davidic king on the throne up until this very day.
32. It should also be noted that the priesthood and temple worship of the second commonwealth were only a shadow of the glorious priesthood prior to the dispersion, lacking the Ark of the Covenant and Urim and Thummim.
33. As of 33 A.D., the Aaronic Priesthood has been surpassed by the Royal Priesthood.
34. In 70 AD the Temple is again destroyed, effectively ending the function of the Aaronic Priesthood up until this very day (cp. Jer. 33:21).
35. The Kingship and true priesthood will only be reestablished when he “whose right it is comes”.
36. There is only one person who truly has the right to the throne and will sit on it again. That is the Lord Jesus Christ, who is in view here in this passage (Ezek. 34:23; 37:24 cp. Psa. 110:2; Isa. 9:6; Jer. 23:5, 6; Luke 1:32)!!!
37. Jesus is the One who has the right to the throne, through both His mother, Mary and His foster father, Joseph (Matt. 1:1; Luke 3:23ff).
38. There were no Davidic Kings from Zedekiah to Jesus’ future ascension to the throne. It is for this reason that it is simply nuts for the Jews to explain away Daniel’s Seventy Weeks prophecy by some “prince” who died.
39. Jesus will also sit on the throne as a priest according to the order of Melchizedek (Jesus was from the tribe of Judah, not Levi - Psa. 110:4; Zech. 6:12-15).

**EXEGESIS OF VERSES 28 & 29:**VERSE TWENTY-EIGHT

**“And you son of man, prophesy. For you will say to the sons of Ammon, ‘thus says Adonay Yahweh concerning the sons of Ammon and concerning their reproach’. Say, ‘a sword will be brought out for the slaughter, polished to consume so that it is like lightening”.**

וְאַתָּה בֶן-אָדָם הַנָּבִיא וְאַמַּרְתָּ כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה אֱלֹהֵי בְנֵי  
עַמּוֹן וְאֵל-חֲרָפְתָם וְאַמַּרְתָּ חָרֵב חָרֵב פְּתוּחָהּ לְטַבַּח מְרוּטָהּ  
לְהַכִּיל לְמַעַן בָּרָק

(conj. ו/w "and" + pron-2nd-m-s אַתָּה/’attah "you" + noun-m-s const. בֶּן/ben "son of..." + noun-m-s אָדָם/’adam "man" + verb-niph-imper-m-s נָבֵא/naba' "prophesy" + conj. ו/w "and" + verb-qal-perf-2nd-m-s [waw consec] אָמַר/’amar "you will say" + adv. כֹּה/koh "thus" + verb-qal-perf-3rd-m-s אָמַר/’amar "says" + proper noun יְהוִה אֲדֹנָי "Adonay Yahweh" + prep. אֵל/’el "concerning" + noun-m-pl בְּנֵי/ben "sons of..." + proper noun עַמּוֹן/’ammon "Ammon" + conj. ו/w "and" + prep. אֵל/’el "concerning" + noun-f-s w/ suf-3rd-m-pl חֲרָפָה/cherpah "their reproach" + conj. ו/w "and" + verb-qal-perf-2nd-m-s [waw consec] אָמַר/’amar "you will say" + noun-f-s חֶרֶב/cherreb "a sword" + noun-f-s חֶרֶב/chereb "a sword" + verb-qal-pass-part-f-s פָּתַח/patach "opened" + prep. ל/L "for" + noun-m-s טַבַּח/tebach "slaughter" + verb-qal-pass-prt-f-s מְרוּט/marat "polished" + prep. ל/L "to" + verb-hiph-inf. const. כּוֹל/kol "consume" + prep. לְמַעַן/lema’an "in order that..." + noun-m-s בָּרָק/baraq "lightning").

VERSE TWENTY-NINE

**“While seeing false visions and practicing false divination for you to set you upon the necks of the wicked wounded for whom the day has come at the time of the iniquity of the end”.**



(prep. ב/B "in" + verb-qal-inf. const. חָזַח/chazah "seeing visions" + prep. w/ suf-2nd-f-s ל/L "for you" + noun-m-s שָׁוְא/shawe' "falsehood" + prep. ב/B "in" + verb-qal-inf. const. "practicing divination" + prep. w/ suf-2nd-f-s ל/L "for you" + noun-m-s כָּזַב/kazab "lie" + prep. ל/L "to" + verb-qal-inf. const. נָתַן/nathan "give" + sign. d.o. w/ suf-2nd-f-s אֵת/eth "you" + prep. אֶל/el "unto" + noun-m-pl const. צְוּאָה/tsawua'r "necks of..." + noun-m-pl const. חָלַל/chalal "wounded/slain" + adj-m-pl רָשָׁע/rasha' "wicked" + rel. pron אֲשֶׁר/asher "whom" + verb-qal-perf-3rd-m-s בָּאוּ/bo' "has come" + adv. יוֹמָם/yomam "by day" + prep. ב/B "in" + noun-f-s const. יָמֵי/eth "time of..." + noun-f-s const. עֲוֹן/aon "iniquity of..." + noun-m-s קֵץ/qets "end").

#### ANALYSIS OF VERSES 28 & 29:

1. Having finished His prophecy of end of the priesthood and royal family of Israel, Ezekiel is now to address the sons of Ammon.
2. Yahweh tells him in verse twenty-eight, **"And you son of man, prophesy. For you will say to the sons of Ammon, 'thus says Adonay Yahweh concerning the sons of Ammon and concerning their reproach'..."**
3. This is a bit of hard verse to hear. The immediate question is, "how is he to speak to the sons of Ammon if he is a dispersed Jew living in Babylon?!"
4. No, God is not sending Ezekiel to Ammon on a missionary journey in the same way He sent Jonah to Nineveh.
5. His audience is the dispersed Israelites, the house of rebellion (Ezek. 2:3-6; 3:4-9).
6. However here he is to address the sons of Ammon and speak to them as if they were present for the benefit of the dispersed Israelites who hear him.
7. The next question that comes up is "Why discuss the sons of Ammon? Don't the Jews have enough problems of their own?!"
8. Recall that earlier in our passage God had Ezekiel make a road that departed two ways, one way to Jerusalem and one way to Rabbah. Ezekiel is to point the sword to Jerusalem (Ezek. 21:19-23).
9. As Nebuchadnezzar's army approaches, there is apparently a question of what territory should be invaded first, Judah or Ammon. While God sends them directly to Judah, Ammon is not off the hook.
10. The prophecy indicates that she is going to be destroyed too, shortly after Nebuchadnezzar finishes off Jerusalem.
11. Note that Ezekiel does not just prophesy of the nation but is to prophesy about their "reproach".
12. Our word for "reproach" is the feminine, singular noun, חֶרְפָּה/cher'pah, "reproach, scorn, disgrace".

13. The word has in its connotation, the act of casting blame or scorn. When Nebuchadnezzar had passed them by, they essentially saw Israel as one deserving of destruction while they were favored to continue on to see many more days.
14. Such speech and thinking are adamantly false!
15. He continues in verse twenty-eight, **“...Say, ‘a sword will be brought out for the slaughter, polished to consume so that it is like lightening’”**.
16. We have already received word of this polished sword and carnage it caused for Israel. Now it is being directed to another nation, Ammon. They too will bear its wrath.
17. The sword in view belongs to no other than Nebuchadnezzar, whose army is moving like a juggernaut across the Middle East at his time and is soon to arrive at the doors step of both the Jews and the Ammonites (Ezek. 21:14).
18. We do not have all the gory details concerning the sword moving about back and forth killing all that are in its path.
19. This is a more abbreviated account. However the hearers were informed of how lethal it is.
20. In verse twenty-nine, God speaks directly to the sword stating **“While seeing false visions and practicing false divination for you to set you upon the necks of the wicked wounded for whom the day has come at the time of the iniquity of the end”**.
21. Recall that the trifecta of divination that Nebuchadnezzar and his officers consulted seemed to be false in the eyes of the Israelites (Ezek. 21:23).
22. Such is the case in the eyes of the Ammonites as well! Despite their evil and their lack of loyalty to Nebuchadnezzar, they did not think that they would be found out and attacked.
23. Their own priests and shamans had apparently divined that they would be safe from the sword of Nebuchadnezzar.
24. No doubt when they got word of Nebuchadnezzar passing them up to hit Judah, they probably had a sense of relief.
25. Indeed, after Jerusalem fell, they began establishing an alternative government, opposed to that of Babylon (Jer. 30:13-41:10).
26. However, they were decidedly wrong as the sword is coming to their front porch as well and will be placed on the necks of the “wicked wounded”.
27. These unbelieving pagans will be destroyed and sent to Hell in a very short time.
28. This occurs “at the time of the iniquity of the end”. This is the same phrase used earlier of the king of Israel who is the recipient of God’s overruling will (Ezek. 21:25).
29. As previously stated, this need not mean the SUD (though it often does). In the case of the king of Judah, he was blinded and imprisoned, where he later died.
30. Hence, his punishment (iniquity) was ended as he was removed from the throne and unable to continue his evil enterprises.
31. Here the reference is to the 5<sup>th</sup> cycle of discipline which is about to hit the Ammonites resulting in the complete destruction of their people.
32. “As a matter of history, the Ammonites were conquered, and their country desolated, by Nebuchadnezzar a few years after the destruction of Jerusalem, and they

gradually dwindled away until their name and place among the nations finally disappeared" (Ellicott).

33. As previously stated, this is an abbreviated account of their destruction. Ezekiel will be giving us more details of their future later in the book (Ezek. 25:2-7).

### ANALYSIS OF VERSES 30 – 32:

#### VERSE THIRTY

**"Return it to its sheath. In the place where you were created, in the land of your origin, I will judge you".**

הָשִׁב אֶל-תַּעֲרָהּ בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-נִבְרְאתָ בָאָרֶץ מִכְרוֹתֶיךָ  
אֲשַׁפֵּט אֹתְךָ

(verb-hiph-imper-m-s שׁוּב/shub "return" + prep. אֶל/el "to" + noun-m-s const w/ suf-3rd-f-s תַּעֲרָה/ta'ar "its sheath" + prep. בַּ/B "in" + noun-m-s const. מָקוֹם/maqom "place" + rel. pron. אֲשֶׁר/asher "where" + verb-niph-perf-2nd-f-s בָּרָא/bara' "you were created" + prep. בַּ "in" + noun-f-s const. אֶרֶץ/erets "land of..." + noun-f-pl w/ suf-2nd-m-s מִכְרוֹת/mikurah "your origin" + verb-qal-imperf-1st-c-s שַׁפֵּט/shaphat "I will judge" + sing. d.o. w/ suf-2nd-f-s אֹת/eth "you").

#### VERSE THIRTY-ONE

**“And I will pour out My indignation on you. I will breathe on you the fire of My fury upon you and I will give you into the hand of brutal men, devisers of destruction”.**

וְשָׁפַכְתִּי עָלֶיךָ זַעַמִּי בְּאֵשׁ עֲבָרְתִי אֶפִּיחַ עָלֶיךָ וְנָתַתִּיךָ  
בְּיַד אַנְשִׁים בְּעָרִים חָרְשֵׁי מְשַׁחִית

(conj. ו/w "and" + verb-qal-perf-1st-c-s שָׁפַךְ/shaphak "I will pour out" + prep. w/ suf-2nd-f-s עַל/'al "upon you" + noun-m-s w/ suf-1st-c-s זַעַם/za'am "my anger/indignation" + prep. ב/B "in" + noun-f-s const. אֵשׁ/'esh "fire of..." + noun-f-s w/ suf-1st-c-s עֲבָרָה/'eberah "my fury" + verb-hiph-1st-c-s אֶפִּיחַ/puach "I will breathe/blow" + prep w/ suf-2nd-f-s עַל/'al "upon you" + conj. ו/w "and" + verb-qal-perf-1st-c-s [waw consec] נָתַן/nathan "I will give you" + prep. ב/B "into" + noun-f-s const. יָד/yad "hand of..." + noun-m-pl אִישׁ/'iysh "men" + verb-qal-part-m-pl בָּעָרִים/ba'ar "brutal" + noun-m-pl const. חָרְשֵׁי/charash "devisers of..." + noun-m-s מְשַׁחִית/mashechiyth "destruction").

#### VERSE THIRTY-TWO

**“You will be fuel for the fire. Your blood will be in the midst of the land and you will not be remembered. For I, Yahweh, have spoken”.**

לְאֵשׁ תִּהְיֶה לְאַכְלָה דָּמְךָ יְהִיָּה בְּתוֹךְ הָאָרֶץ לֹא תִזְכָּר  
כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה דִּבַּרְתִּי

(prep. ל/L "for" + noun-f-s w/ d.a. אֵשׁ/'esh "the fire" + verb-qal-imperf-2nd-m-s תִּהְיֶה/hayah "you will be" + prep. ל/L "for" + noun-f-s אַכְלָה/'akalah "fuel" + noun-m-s w/ suf-2nd-f-s דָּמְךָ/dam "your blood" + verb-qal-imperf-3rd-m-s תִּהְיֶה/hayah "it will be" + prep. ב/B "in" + noun-m-s const. תוֹךְ/tawek "midst of..." + noun-f-s w/ d.a. אָרֶץ/'erets "the land" + neg. adv. לֹא/lo' "not" + verb-niph-imperf-2nd-f-s זָכַר/zakar "you will be remembered" + conj. כִּי/kiy "for" + pron-1st-c-s אֲנִי/'aniy "I" + proper noun יְהוָה/yhwh "Yahweh" + verb-piel-perf-1st-c-s דִּבַּר/dabar "I have spoken").

#### **ANALYSIS OF VERSES 30 – 32:**

1. The polished sword has finished its business and is now to return to its homeland.
2. Yahweh speaks directly to the sword in verse thirty, instructing it **“Return it to its sheath...”**
3. Once a sword is finished with its job it is returned to its sheath. Such is its home so to speak.

4. Remember that the sword is used metaphorically for the Babylonian army and thus the people of Babylon. They are to return to their homeland. While a contingency of troops are left behind to administer these outposts, the brunt of the troops will return to Babylon (II Kings 25:1ff).
5. However note that there are additional details regarding these people returning to their land.
6. They are said to return to **“...the place where you were created, in the land of your origin, I will judge you”**.
7. Our word for create is the niphal, perfect verb, **בָּרָא**/bara' “to create, to make”.
8. It is used in reference to the place where the Babylonian race was created and established by God in line with His plan for the human race (Gen. 10:5).
9. Babylon was a very old city dating back to the days of Hammurabi. It declined 1000 years prior but rose up in the days of Nabopolassar in 610 BC who led them to independence from their Assyrian masters that year (*Babylonia*).
10. Referred to in history as the New Babylonians or Chaldeans, the city Babylon became the dominant force in the Middle East, defeating Assyria and rivaling Egypt.
11. Note that it is in the land of their creation that God will judge them.
12. Yes, the Babylonians will be judged as well. This will not happen right away but down the road when they are ripe for the 5<sup>th</sup> cycle of discipline.
13. While God used them as a club to destroy Israel, they were anything but a righteous people.
14. Nebuchadnezzar was God’s servant and later became a believer (Dan. 4:1ff).
15. However the Babylonians for the most part were religious reversionists and brutal people who would one day receive the 5<sup>th</sup> cycle of discipline themselves (Jer. 50:18).
16. They were very harsh on the Jewish people, and while God allowed them to do so in order to punish His people, He must of necessity turn around and punish the Babylonians for their sins (II Chron. 36:17).
17. He continues in verse thirty-one, **“And I will pour out My indignation on you. I will breathe on you the fire of My fury upon you and I will give you into the hand of brutal men, devisers of destruction”**.
18. Such language describes the 5<sup>th</sup> cycle of discipline.
19. Babylon will be utterly destroyed as payback for the harsh manner in which she treated her neighbors (Jer. 25:12).
20. There is a great deal of confusion on how Babylon met the 5<sup>th</sup> cycle of discipline.
21. Jerusalem was sacked and the final Jews were deported in 607 B.C. Babylon was at the height of her power at that time under Nebuchadnezzar II.
22. However by 556 B.C., the kingdom was in decline at the time that her last king, Nabonidus, ascended to the throne (*Fall of Babylon*).
23. He often left the city of Babylon, leaving his son, Belshazzar in charge. Belshazzar was very unpopular with the Babylonian people, as was Nabonidus.
24. By 539, Cyrus of Persia had begun his final push towards Babylon. In September of that year, he won a major victory at the Battle of Opis (ibid.).

25. Opis was not merely a Persian victory but a route where heavy casualties were inflicted on the Babylonians (*Battle of Opis*)
26. From there Cyrus marched on Sippar who surrendered to him in a short time. It was then time to march on to Babylon.
27. The takeover of Babylon was a stroke of genius. The city was large, had massive walls and gates, and had the Euphrates River running through the middle of the city through metal grates.
28. Cyrus had his men dig a canal which caused much of the River's flow to be diverted away from the city.
29. This greatly reduced the depth of the river, allowing Cyrus' men to wade across and begin dismantling the metal grates through which the River flowed into the city.
30. Other Texts note that the Persians had also gained access to the city by breaching one of the gates.
31. Adding to their success was the fact that the entire city was engaged in a great feast to the moon god, Sin.
32. Daniel's account confirms that the royal family and nobility were partaking of this celebration while in the royal palace (Dan. 5:1ff).
33. Once they breached the walls, Cyrus' army entered into the city, made their way to the King's palace and killed Belshazzar, his wives and concubines.
34. The Greek historian, Xenophon, describes the events in his *Cyropaedia*, "Thereupon they entered; and of those they met some were struck down and slain, and others fled into their houses, and some raised the hue and cry, but Gobryas and his friends covered the cry with their shouts, as though they were revelers themselves. And thus, making their way by the quickest route, they soon found themselves before the king's palace. (27) Here the detachment under Gobryas and Gadatas found the gates closed, but the men appointed to attack the guards rushed on them as they lay drinking round a blazing fire, and closed with them then and there. (28) As the din grew louder and louder, those within became aware of the tumult, till, the king bidding them see what it meant, some of them opened the gates and ran out. (29) Gadatas and his men, seeing the gates swing wide, darted in, hard on the heels of the others who fled back again, and they chased them at the sword's point into the presence of the king. (30) They found him on his feet, with his drawn scimitar in his hand. By sheer weight of numbers they overwhelmed him: and not one of his retinue escaped, they were all cut down, some flying, others snatching up anything to serve as a shield and defending themselves as best they could' (*Fall of Babylon*).
35. By time the people awoke the next day, they were under Persian rule.
36. According to sources of the time, many in the empire had grown disaffected with the rule of Nabonidus and his son, Belshazzar. Nabonidus had taken actions that led some people to actually see Cyrus as the legitimate descendant of the Babylonian Kings (Nabonidus was an Assyrian!!!).
37. The defeat and rise of Persian Dominance was one of skill and genius. It is for this reason that God gives credit to the Persians as "devisors of destruction".
38. Our word translated as "devisors" is the masculine, plural construct of שָׂרָרָה/charash, "ones who carve or engrave".

39. Hence, in view are those who conduct destruction in the way that a sculptor creates a statue or a work of art.
40. I do not think that anyone could argue that Cyrus' overthrow of one of the most formidable cities in the history of the world was anything less than a work of art, a masterpiece if you will.
41. However the city was not destroyed but continued to thrive and served as a major center of political power and higher learning.
42. Nabonidus was later captured and exiled to a remote part of the empire.
43. The final death knell of the 5<sup>th</sup> cycle hit the nation years later when the walls were breached and all remnants of the Babylonian people and culture was all but destroyed.
44. During the reign of the Persian kings there were uprisings in Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar the III in 522, under Nebuchadnezzar IV in 521 BC and by Belshimani and Shamash-eriba 482 BC (*Fall of Babylon*).
45. While these revolts allowed for short periods of independence and self rule, each of them was quickly crushed and Babylon fell back under Persian control. During this time the walls were destroyed.
46. The city continued to be populated and an important center of learning until the time of Alexander the Great. However after his death, the city declined rapidly and the people were deported to Seleucia (ibid.).
47. God continues in verse stating **"You will be fuel for the fire. Your blood will be in the midst of the land and you will not be remembered. For I, Yahweh, have spoken"**.
48. While the takeover of the city was mostly peaceful, there were still heavy casualties in some of the fighting leading up to the takeover of Babylon.
49. A partial fulfillment of this prophecy occurs during the initial Persian takeover. The final fulfillment occurring some years later when the walls of Babylon fell.
50. While fighting at the Battle of Opis was severe and resulted in heavy casualties, much of the takeover was more political in scope.
51. Leith notes that Cyrus's success is credited to military acumen, to judicious bribery, and to an energetic publicity campaign waged throughout Babylonia, which portrayed him as a lenient and religiously tolerant overlord
52. For example Bryant notes that "Cyrus was said to have persuaded a Babylonian provincial governor named Gobryas (and a supposed Gadates) to defect to his side. Gutium, the territory governed by Gobryas, was a frontier region of considerable size and strategic importance, which Cyrus was said to have used as the starting point for his invasion" (p. 40).
53. Because Nabonidus and his son were so unpopular, and Cyrus so liberal and accepting of other's religion, many saw him as the descendant of the Babylonian kings and more of a liberator than an enemy.
54. In a nutshell, Cyrus took over the Babylonian Empire, but life for the average Babylonian did not change much. Indeed, for many, life improved.

55. The final death knell of the city and people would be down the road a bit. Such is when the final outpourings of this prophesy will reach its fulfillment (cp. Isa 14:4-6; Jeremiah 51:63).

## The End of Ezekiel Chapter Twenty-One November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023

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