

# CuppaJ Cafe

Daily devotions  
from God's Word...



cuppajcafe.org



## The Grind

*Savor the taste of our previous brew*



Since everything in the Bible leads into and prepares the way for what comes after it, refresh yesterday's Brew to let the previous passage get you ready for today's verses. Though you should have already explored the passage, personally with Jesus, here is the heart of what we saw, together.

**In the previous passage**, verses 14-21, the LORD tells Ezekiel that the future of Israel depends on the exiles rather than those remaining in Jerusalem or Judah.

14 The LORD delayed His departure from Jerusalem to pass on two messages to Ezekiel. Verses 1-6 set up the first in verses 7-13, a scathing bulletin for the folks in Jerusalem directed at the 25 men on the city counsel and its ringleaders. Now, it's the exiles' turn to hear from the LORD. While God intended for Ezekiel to report the entire vision that began in Chapter 8 to them to destroy any confidence they still had in Jerusalem rescuing them from Babylon, He throws in this oracle about regenerating a remnant to inspire hope among the exiled community. Finished rebuking Jerusalem in v.13, "**then**" or, next, says Ezekiel, "**this message came to me from the LORD.**" The prophet introduces this second message as divine for two chief reasons: so the exiles won't think he made it up, and they will know that God loves the ones who let Him regenerate them.

**Then** Next, after he delivered the first one in verses 7-13,

**this message came to me** this announcement reached me, Ezekiel

**from the LORD:** sent directly by the Eternal One

15 The LORD reminds Ezekiel, "**Son of man,**" that though he is an imperfect descendant of Adam who needs saving, "**the people still left in Jerusalem**" have gone too far by sizing him up as a loser. To them, Ezekiel, his relatives, "**and all the people of Israel who are in exile...are far away from the LORD,**" permanently cut off from Him because they no longer live in Jerusalem. People today make the same mistake, confusing membership in the spiritual establishment with belonging to Christ. To the Jew, owning a piece of real estate in the Promised Land meant they had a covenant relationship with God and a claim on His promises. So, sending them into exile signified that God had rescinded the exiles' covenant privileges and revoked their claim on His promises. At the same time, the people still living in Jerusalem also misread their continued presence in Jerusalem for ongoing favor from God. In their eyes, while the exiles were unclean and God-forsaken, those who remained in Jerusalem were still righteous and God's chosen ones – entitled to the covenant shares forfeited by the exiles. "**So now** [the people still in Jerusalem concluded], **he** [the LORD] **has given their** [the exiles'] **land to us.**"

**"Son of man,** Descendant of Adam and member of the fallen race that still needs saving

**the people still left in Jerusalem** the citizens who remain in the once holy city

**are talking about you and your relatives** are referring to you, Ezekiel, and members of your family

and all the people of Israel who are in exile. Plus, the rest of the Israelites who no longer live in the Promised Land

They are saying, 'Those people are far away from the LORD, declaring, "Those souls are permanently cut off from the Eternal One

so now he has given their land to us!' it's only fair then, because they no longer participate in the covenant, that the Eternal One has redistributed their shares in the Promised Land to us"

16 The LORD, however, disagreed with their impression of the situation. As He had already shown Ezekiel in 5:3 and 6:8-9, and had Ezekiel act out for the people – the exiles were the future of Israel, because God would recoup a remnant, a handful of survivors from the exiles to keep Israel going. So, **"therefore,"** He instructed Ezekiel, **"tell the exiles, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says."** While the people in Jerusalem thought living in Jerusalem with access to the Temple made them better than the exiles, the LORD told Ezekiel to say: **"Although I have scattered you in the countries of the world, I will be a sanctuary to you during your time in exile."** Despite evicting them from the Land and cutting them off from the Temple, the LORD did not break off His relationship with them. Instead, preparing the exiles for a more personal relationship with Him under the New Covenant, He promised to be present among them without a building throughout the exile wherever they are. In the immediate sense, God made up for lack of a Temple and sacrifices by protecting and providing for them and making Himself available to them for prayer throughout their captivity. In the long run, the LORD's promise here points to Jesus who echoed this very idea when He told His disciples: **"Wherever two or three gather in my name, there I am in the midst of them"** (Mt. 18:20). Under the New Covenant, a personal relationship with God has clearly replaced the inferior idea that you must show up at a central building for services or participate in a ritual to have a share in God's promises.

**"Therefore, So, to counter the lies spread by those who still live in Jerusalem**

tell the exiles, announce to the people who no longer live in it

'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Let me quote the Eternal One who does as He pleases because no one can stop Him

Although I have scattered you in the countries of the world, while I, the Eternal One dispersed you exiles around the world the same way I scattered the human race for building the Tower of Babel

I will be a sanctuary to you I, the Eternal One will display my presence to you the same way I did in the old days to the citizens of Jerusalem

during your time in exile. Throughout your banishment from the Promised Land!

17 The LORD offers additional evidence that the exiles are His true people rather than those still living in Jerusalem. Besides providing for and protecting them with His sacred presence, the LORD now promises them another blessing in two parts: **"I, the Sovereign LORD, will gather you back from the nations where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel once again."** The reference to **"the nations"** means the LORD will rescue the remnant from – both the current Babylonian and the earlier Assyrian – captivity. Unable to save itself, the remnant will experience deliverance by the same powerful God who delivered their ancestors from Egypt. And like their Old Covenant forefathers, they will enter the land as God's guaranteed gift, not by bogus arrogant claim (v.15). By faith in salvation through the Suffering Servant rather than self-righteousness, the remnant will reconcile with God and have a share in the Promised Land. They point to the remnant today, in exile from the Promised Land and without the strength to regain it, who, find reconciliation with God through Messiah Jesus and receive the gift of salvation (Rom. 5:6).

I, the Sovereign LORD, I, the Eternal One who does as He pleases because no one can stop Him

will gather you back from the nations will collect you exiles from all over the world

where you have been scattered, wherever you were driven

**and I will give you the land of Israel** what's more I, the Eternal One will also make a present of the Promised Land to you

**once again one more time.'**

18 Many churches teach that God restores Israel, but they are mistaken. Instead of returning Israel to its former condition, God will reinvent Israel as a converted remnant. Verses 18-20 describe what happens to the remnant, who receive the blessings in verses 16, 17. Instead of a series of events, they occur simultaneously. First, v.18 sums up the effect of God's deliverance; then, verses 19, 20 explain the details of how it will come about. In a general preview of the more defined description in 36:25-27, God announces that the remnant will no longer worship idols – in any way, shape, or form. Instead of resuming the ungodly practices that led to their downfall, **"they will remove every trace of their vile images and detestable idols."** Not only will they know the LORD has dealt with them (verses 10, 12), but they will also worship Him, alone.

**"When the people return to their homeland,** At the time the remnant of the exiles reenter the Promised Land

**they will remove every trace of their vile images and detestable idols.** the converted few will get rid of every fragment of their former idolatry

19 The remnant will not succeed where self-righteousness has failed the rest of Israel. The expression, **"they will remove,"** does not mean the remnant will accomplish this on their own. It merely describes what God will achieve through them. To turn from their idolatrous past and worship the LORD, exclusively the people must change. Their transformation includes **"a new spirit within them"** graciously put there by God, and the gift of **"a tender, responsive heart,"** to replace the **"stony, stubborn heart"** that caused them to rebel against God. Fulfilling the prophecy of Moses that: **"The LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the hearts of all your descendants, so that you will love him with all your heart and soul and so you may live"** (Deut. 30:6), the LORD points to what happens, **"When [people] come to Christ."** They get **"circumcised, but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature"** (Col. 2:11). As Paul explains: **"For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead"** (Col. 2:12). In other words, the remnant starts a brand new life with God through a new relationship with Him. Though He mentions **"the people"** in v.18, v.19 narrows down who will **"return to their homeland."** Instead of merely going back to their old stomping grounds, these people are: **"the remnant of Jacob [who] will return to the Mighty God"** (Isa. 10:21). The language confirms the transformation: from numerous descendants of self-made Jacob, a handful will give up their independence for a Christ-centered relationship with God.

**And** On top of that

**I will give them singleness of heart** I, the Eternal One will confer on the remnant, hearts so dedicated to one person or purpose that they no longer harbor ulterior motives

**and put a new spirit within them.** as well as place a fresh way of thinking inside of them

**I will take away their stony, stubborn heart** I, the Eternal One will replace their tough old hearts that used to resist my authority and control

**and give them a tender, responsive heart,** with brand new cooperative ones.

20 The word **"so"** introduces the result of this transformation: **"they [the remnant] will obey my decrees and regulations."** Substituting a new spirit for their old rebellious attitude and replacing their unwilling hearts with cooperative ones will empower the remnant to carry out God's will for them. In other words, unlike the rest of the exiles still striving to live by self, God will enable the remnant to live up to His expectations for them. As in the NT, the only obedience God wants is "faith," trust and dependence upon Him that results in right choices and behavior (Rom. 16:20). Through the new faith relationship with Him, God's power will replace human weakness and the mind of Christ will overrule the sinful nature. This points to the New Covenant believer with Christ living in his heart to generate impulses that comply with God's will, together with the Holy Spirit supplying

the power to deny the flesh and carry out each obedient urge. Endowed with this Spirit, God's own Spirit according to 36:27, and a heart that honors the heavenly Father as a true child should, **"then [the remnant] will truly be my people, and I will be their God."** As children should reflect their fathers, so the remnant will show their parent-child relationship with God, and that they are truly in His image.

Based on this passage, Paul told the Romans: **"But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you. Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children"** (Rom. 8:9-16).

The fruit of the Spirit represents a triumph over self and resemblance to Christ. Visible displays of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance is the only indisputable evidence that we belong to God. The LORD promises this to the remnant, His New Covenant people – starting with the handful of Jews who went back to Jerusalem by returning to God by faith, and climaxing with all those who approach the heavenly Jerusalem by reconciling with God through Messiah Jesus (Heb. 12:22-24). No wonder Paul told the Ephesians: **"God saved you by his grace when you believed. So you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece; He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago"** (Eph. 2:8-10).

**so** therefore, as a result of this transformation

**they will obey my decrees and regulations.** The remnant will live up to My divine expectations, both when I issue orders and hold them to My rules

**Then they will truly be my people,** At that point, the converted handful will really be my relatives

**and I will be their God.** Plus, reflecting my image once again, I, the Eternal One will claim them as My creation

21 The linking words, **"but as for,"** introduce a very different destiny for those who remain untransformed, stuck in their old idolatrous ways. Instead of missing God and wanting to return to Him, they **"long for vile images and detestable idols,"** that the remnant will completely renounce. Just as Moses set before the people "a blessing and a curse" (Deut. 11:26), and Jesus spoke about two ways – one that leads to life and the other to destruction (Mt. 7:13ff), so the LORD confirms Moses' announcement and sets the stage for Jesus' declaration. The LORD will reconcile with those who give up the idols in this vision to return to Him; they have hope. But those who still prefer the gods of their neighbors instead of Him have betrayed their marriage vows and deserve divorce and destruction; they are doomed. While the Suffering Servant will repay the remnant's debt to God, the rest of the exiles – still under the same death penalty as those in besieged Jerusalem – must still settle their account with the LORD who promises **"I will repay them fully for their sins"**. The future of God's people now rested with the exiles, though they did not have the strength in themselves to make it happen. While Jerusalem had reached a dead end and would topple along with the doomed citizens who built it, the exiles, or more accurately – a handful of them, the remnant – had a mission to rebuild God's dwelling place – not with human energy, mortar and brick – but with the divine strength and wisdom of their new God-given plans, spirit and hearts. This situation foreshadows the work of the Gospel entrusted to Christ and His disciples to build an indestructible church, able to withstand all the powers of hell (Mt. 16:18).

**But as for** In contrast to the hope I will give to the remnant,

those who long for vile images and detestable idols, the exiles who still pine for the disgusting symbols of the gods of their neighbors instead of Me,

I will repay them fully for their sins. are doomed because I, the Eternal One intend to make them pay off their debts to Me

I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!" I, the Eternal One who cannot be denied because no one can stop Me from doing what I want, guarantee it!



## Now Serving **The Brew**

*Let us pour you a fresh cup, ground verse-by-verse from today's passage*

In today's passage, verses 22-25, the vision that began in Chapter 8, ends with the LORD's final departure from the city of Jerusalem. So please open your Bibles to Ezekiel Chapter 11, and let me pour you a hot CuppaJesus from today's brew, starting with v.22.



### WHAT TO LOOK FOR TODAY

Here are the main items in the text that will lead you to its understanding.

| Parts                | Verse 22  | Verse 23   | Verse 24  | Verse 25                                    |
|----------------------|---|--|---|---|
| <b>Links</b>         | Then, and 2x  | Then, and  | Afterward, and so   | And   |
| <b>Persons</b>       | The God of  | The LORD   | The Spirit of God, me, my (Zeke), the people (the exiles)           | I, me (Zeke), the people (exiles), the LORD |
| <b>Places</b>        | Into (the air), Israel, beside/above (them 2x)                      | Up from the city, above the mountain to the east | Back, to Babylonia, to (the exiles) there, in (exile), to Jerusalem |   |
| <b>Things</b>        | The cherubim, their 2x, wings, the air, wheels, them 2x, the God of | The glory of                                     | Exile, the vision of (my) visit                                     | Everything                                  |
| <b>Words Helpers</b> | Lifted, rose, hovered<br>With                                       | Went, stopped                                    | Carried, ended<br>Again   | Told, had shown                             |

Pay careful attention to every item as you follow today's devotional in your study Bible. We have already grouped them by colors in "Today's Text," so you can follow the writer's flow of thought for yourself. Capture and grasp what he is trying to tell you with matching color pencils to draw lines connecting items to others in the same color-family, and a black pencil to cross-link items from different color-families that still have something to do with one another. Use circles, boxes, triangles, etc. to identify topics and themes (triangles, for instance, might represent the Trinity). Also mark with asterisks, etc., the ones you need to look up later for more information or greater details.

### TODAY'S TEXT

#### NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

22 Then the cherubim lifted their wings and rose into the air with their wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel hovered above them.

23 Then the glory of the LORD went up from the city and stopped above the mountain to the east.

24 Afterward the Spirit of God carried me back again to Babylonia, to the people in exile there. And so ended the vision of my visit to Jerusalem.

25 And I told the exiles everything the LORD had shown me.

## THE EXPANDED BIBLE

<sup>22</sup> Then the living creatures [cherubim] lifted their wings with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel [his manifest presence] was above them.

<sup>23</sup> The glory of the LORD went up from inside Jerusalem and stopped on the mountain on the east side of the city.

<sup>24</sup> The Spirit [or A wind/or spirit] lifted me up and brought me to the captives [exiles] who had been taken from Judah to Babylonia [Chaldea]. This happened in a vision given by the Spirit [spirit] of God, and then the vision I had seen ended [went up from me].

<sup>25</sup> And I told the captives [exiles] from Judah all the things the LORD had shown me.

## THE SCRIPTURES 1998/2009

22 And the kerubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them, and the esteem of the Elohim of Yisra'el was high above them."

23 And the esteem of יהוה went up from the midst of the city and stood upon the mountain, which is on the east side of the city.

24 And the Spirit lifted me up and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of Elohim into Chaldea, to those in exile. And the vision that I had seen went up from me.

25 And I spoke to those in exile of all the words of יהוה which He had shown me."

## THE NET BIBLE

22 Then the cherubim spread their wings with their wheels alongside them while the glory of the God of Israel hovered above them.

23 The glory of the LORD rose up from within the city and stopped over the mountain east of it.

24 Then a wind lifted me up and carried me to the exiles in Babylonia, in the vision given to me by the Spirit of God. Then the vision I had seen went up from me.

25 So I told the exiles everything the LORD had shown me.

## TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:

22 The linking word, "Then" normally indicates what happens next, but the LORD interrupted the chain of events to underscore three important factors in His departure from Jerusalem. Verses 10:20-11:21 introduce key concepts that must be considered before the LORD could leave the city. First, the LORD tied the creatures supporting His chariot/throne to the cherubim that served the cloud of His presence in the sanctuary. This would remove any hint of disagreement among celestial beings with God over His decision to abandon the Temple, withdrawing forgiveness from the citizens of Jerusalem, and to vacate the city, revoking their covenant status with Him. Second, extinguishing false hopes of the people still living in Jerusalem that their continuing connection with the religious establishment meant they still had a claim on God's promises, He pronounced doom on them. And, third, assuring the exiles that separation from Him and the establishment did not imply an end to their relationship with Him, He promised to be present with them throughout their banishment from the land that represented His promises to them.

Now that He has set the record straight about its full implications, the LORD picks up where He left off in 10:19 and resumes the story of His departure in v.22. "The [same] cherubim [that served God's presence in the sanctuary] lifted their wings and rose into the air with their wheels beside them", just as they did in 10:19. Not only are they on their way out the Jerusalem door, but repeating the scene in 10:19, "and [or, also] the glory of the God of Israel [once again] hovered above them." The LORD takes us back to the way things were in 10:19 to show that nothing has changed since then – before He proceeds with His plan to leave. The verse ends with Him and His celestial escort, once again in the air and poised to depart, together.

**Then** At that point in the story, at that time in the vision

the cherubim lifted their wings the angelic/celestial beings spread their feathery attachments

and rose into the air in order to take off

with their wheels beside them, accompanied by the wheels next to them

and the glory of the God of Israel hovered above them. plus the majestic presence of the nation's Creator floated over them

23 "Then," or "after" the chariot throne went airborne with God "hover(ing)" above the cherubim as He did in the sanctuary, "the glory of the LORD [the divine presence promised to the exiles in v.16] went [or, lifted] up from the city" headed for the Judean captives in Babylon. But, instead of disappearing from view, the divine presence "stopped above the mountain to the east". Like Jesus years later, when the religious leaders will make it impossible for Him to stay in the Temple or the city, the LORD pauses at the Mount of Olives to weep over His fallen city and people (Mt. 23:37-39). The final act of divorcing His former bride, Jesus equated vacating the Temple and Jerusalem with permanent separation from National Israel, saying: "your (not, My) house is abandoned and desolate" (Mt. 23:38). In other words, more than mere physical departure, evacuating the Temple and exiting the city had drained His presence from Israel, leaving it abandoned and empty. While the people didn't even notice what had happened, the LORD experienced all the pain of the divorce and fully comprehended its long-term implications. In both Ezekiel's and Jesus' day, the deserted city would soon suffer further destruction. As the people continued to live in denial, the LORD paused at the mountain overlooking the city from the east across Kidron Valley because it broke His heart to leave.

Then Next, after that

the glory of the LORD the majestic presence of the Eternal One

went up from the city rose above and left Jerusalem (on its way to the Judeans exiles in Babylon)

and stopped above the mountain to the east. Plus came to a halt over the Mt. of Olives

24 The prophet abruptly breaks off any further discussion of the LORD's travels or whereabouts. Left hanging, Ezekiel indefinitely prolongs the LORD's pause at Olivet to underscore the mysterious depths of divine grief. The prophet suddenly changes the subject and proceeds to describe what happens next. The same "Spirit of God" that supernaturally transported Ezekiel to Jerusalem by a lock of his hair in 8:3, now "carried [Ezekiel] back again to Babylonia, to the people in exile there." A mystic experience from start to finish, the prophet's return to reality and the elders awaiting a word from the LORD through him in his house marked the "end [of] the vision of my visit to Jerusalem." According to the Hebrew text, just as the LORD's presence "went up from" and abandoned Jerusalem, so Ezekiel says that the vision that began in 8:3 also "went up from" and deserted him. Ezekiel returns, a whole lot wiser, to the house he never physically left, in the normal state he had before the vision began.

Afterward Later

the Spirit of God carried me back again the third Person of the Trinity transported me to where I started

to Babylonia, to the people in exile there. To the colony, to my fellow exiles in Tel-abib

And so That's how

ended the vision of my visit to Jerusalem. My mystic tour of the former holy city terminated

25 But the story doesn't end there. The word "and" attaches v.25 to v.24 as the next step in the sequence of events God planned for Ezekiel upon his return to Babylon. Besides regaining consciousness in his home, God intended for the prophet to tell, "the exiles everything the LORD had shown [him]." They needed to know that they, not the folks back home are the future of God's people. So, the text reaches the purpose of the vision, the goal of Ezekiel's experience. As OT scholar John Wevers concludes: "The point of the vision is not a message to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but rather to the exiles" (NCB Commentary). The prophet left nothing out, but repeated "everything the LORD had shown [him]."





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v.24 \_\_\_\_\_

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v.25 \_\_\_\_\_

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