

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2025

November 2, 2025

Jeremiah's Rescue

Printed Text: Jeremiah 38:7-13

Devotional Reading: Romans 13:1-10

Background Reading: Jeremiah 20:1-6; 37:28; 43:1-7

November 9, 2025

Jerusalem's Fall

Printed Text: 2 Kings 24:18-25:9

Devotional Reading: Lamentations 1:18-22

Background Reading: 2 Kings 23:1-25:21

November 16, 2025

Ezekiel's Sign

Printed Text: Ezekiel 3:10-11; 15-24, 27

Devotional Reading: 2 Corinthians 1:2-6

**Background Reading: Ezekiel 1-3; 2:1-3:27; 8:1-4;
11:22-25; 24:15-24; 33:30-33**

November 23, 2025

Ezekiel's Responsibility

Printed Text: Ezekiel 33:7-16a

Devotional Reading: Jeremiah 17:5-10

Background: Ezekiel 18:1-32; 33:1-20

November 30, 2025

Ezekiel's Vision

Printed Text: Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12

Devotional Reading: Revelation 7:9-17

Background: Ezekiel 47:1-12

Zoom Sunday School Classes – 2 November, 09:00 AM EST
Meeting ID: 848-9423-0612
Pass Code: 669872

Jeremiah's Rescue

Printed Text: Jeremiah 38:7-13

Devotional Reading: Romans 13:1-10

Background Reading: Jeremiah 20:1-6; 37:28; 43:1-7

Daily Bible Readings

Monday: Speak as the Spirit Leads - Matthew 10:16-27

Tuesday: Do Not Fear Mortal Powers - Matthew 10:28-42

Wednesday: Wait Patiently for the Lord - Psalm 37:1-13

Thursday: God Never Forsakes the Righteous - Psalm 37:25-28, 35-40

Friday: Overcome Evil with Good Romans - 12:12-21

Saturday: Speak Even When the Message Stings - Jeremiah 38:1-6

Sunday: An Advocate pleads for Justice - Jeremiah 38:7-13

KEEP IN MIND:

"Then the king commanded Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, "Take three men with you from here, and pull the prophet Jeremiah up from the cistern before he dies." (Jeremiah 38:10, NRSV)

LESSON AIM:

DECIDE to live in accordance God's purpose in your life.

PUT INTO PRACTICE Jeremiah's message about the being faithful to the Word of God.

UNDERSTAND that the cistern in Jeremiah can represent spiritual dryness or entrapment.

BACKGROUND:

Jeremiah is cast into a miry pit but drawn out by Ebed-Melech the Cushite. Being confined in the court of the guard attached to the royal palace, Jeremiah had opportunities of conversing with the soldiers stationed there and the people of Judah who came, and of declaring, in opposition to them, his conviction (which he had indeed expressed from the beginning of the siege) that all resistance to the Chaldeans would be fruitless, and only bring destruction. On this account, the princes who were hostile towards him were so embittered, that they were committed to his death, and obtained permission from the king to cast him into a deep pit (cistern).

The allegation which the princes made against Jeremiah was unjust, because Jeremiah was not expressing his own personal opinion, but was declaring the word of the Lord derived from the divine revelation.

LESSON COMMENTARY:

Jeremiah's Predicament (Jeremiah 38:7-9, NRSV)

⁷Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, a eunuch in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah into the cistern. The king happened to be sitting at the Benjamin Gate,

⁸So Ebed-Melech left the king's house and spoke to the king,

⁹"My lord king, these men have acted wickedly in all they did to the prophet Jeremiah by throwing him into the cistern to die there of hunger, for there is no bread left in the city."

Many of Jeremiah's countrymen wanted him killed. The only official who cared enough to intercede on his behalf was Ebed-Melech ("servant of the king") who was a Cushite from the area of upper Egypt (modern-day southern Egypt, Sudan, and northern Ethiopia). He was serving as an official in the royal palace. His exact position in the palace was not described, but he had access to the king.

Ebed-Melech went to the Benjamin Gate where the king was sitting—either conducting official business or supervising the strengthening of Jerusalem's defenses against the siege. His urgent message to the king was that the other officials had acted wickedly by throwing Jeremiah into a cistern where he would starve to death. Evidently Zedekiah had not known the officials' specific plan to kill Jeremiah or else he had not believed that they would carry it out. But now he knew Jeremiah's death was imminent.

These verses demonstrate to us some very important lessons:

Faithfulness in Adversity. Ebed-Melech's actions demonstrate the importance of standing up for justice, even when it involves personal risk. Christians are called to advocate for the oppressed and speak truth to power. Jeremiah's situation reminds us to remain faithful to God's calling, trusting Him through trials and persecution.

Faith Beyond Borders. Ebed-Melech, a foreigner, shows that God's work transcends ethnic and national boundaries. Believers should embrace the global nature of God's kingdom. Ebed-Melech's intervention highlights the impact one righteous person can have in a corrupt society. Believers are called to be salt and light in the world.

Trust in God's Plan. Jeremiah's suffering reminds us that following God's call can lead to persecution. Christians should be prepared to endure hardship for the sake of the Gospel. Jeremiah's life exemplifies trusting God's plan, even when it leads through suffering and uncertainty. God's provision for Jeremiah through Ebed-Melech illustrates His sovereignty and care for His servants. Trust in God's timing and provision is essential. The account illustrates God's providence in providing help and deliverance through unexpected means and people. Ebed-Melech's compassion for Jeremiah challenges us to act with empathy and kindness towards those in distress. We must remember that despite dire circumstances, God remains faithful to His servants, as seen in Jeremiah's eventual rescue.

The Cost of Disobedience. King Zedekiah's failure to heed God's word through Jeremiah leads to personal and national disaster. But through the power of influence, Ebed-Melech used his position to influence the king for good, demonstrating how God can use us in our spheres of influence.

1. How does Ebed-Melech's background as a Cushite influence our understanding of his role in this account?

2. In what ways does Ebed-Melech's courage inspire you to advocate for justice in your own context?

Jeremiah's Rescue From the Cistern (Jeremiah 38:10-13, NRSV)

¹⁰Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, "Take three men with you from here, and pull the prophet Jeremiah up from the cistern before he dies."

¹¹So Ebed-melech took the men with him and went to the house of the king, to a wardrobe of the storehouse, and took from there old rags and worn-out clothes, which he let down to Jeremiah in the cistern by ropes.

¹²Then Ebed-melech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah, "Just put the rags and clothes between your armpits and the ropes." Jeremiah did so.

¹³Then they drew Jeremiah up by the ropes and pulled him out of the cistern. And Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard.

Zedekiah ordered Ebed-Melech to take 30 men from there—possibly soldiers on duty at the gate—and lift Jeremiah from the cistern before he died. Thirty men would be needed to pull Jeremiah out of the mud and to stand guard against the officials who might oppose the rescue attempt. Ebed-Melech led the soldiers to a room under the treasury in the palace where the opening to the cistern was located. Old rags and worn-out clothes were passed down to Jeremiah to place under his arms to pad the ropes. Jeremiah was then pulled up with the ropes and freed from the cistern. He was again put in the courtyard of the guard.

As with the previous verses, these demonstrate to us some very important lessons:

Symbolism of the Cistern. The cistern can represent spiritual dryness or entrapment. It should cause you to reflect on areas in life where you feel stuck and in need of God's deliverance.

Divine Providence. Jeremiah's rescue from the cistern is a testament to God's protection and faithfulness to His servants, reminding us that God is in control even in dire circumstances. Jeremiah's situation reminds us of the call to remain faithful to God's message, even when facing persecution or hardship. The account encourages believers to act on their faith, demonstrating that true faith often requires taking bold steps to help others. This passage illustrates God's providence in using unlikely individuals to fulfill His purposes. Trust that God can use anyone to accomplish His will. Just as God delivered Jeremiah from the cistern, He can rescue us from our own "pits" of despair and trouble. Trust in His timing and methods.

Leadership and Responsibility. King Zedekiah's decision to rescue Jeremiah, albeit under pressure, shows the impact of leadership choices and the importance of listening to wise counsel. The use of old rags and worn-out clothes shows the importance of being thoughtful and considerate in our efforts to help others. The role of others in Jeremiah's rescue highlights the importance of community and support in our spiritual journey. Ebed-Melech's actions demonstrate the courage required to stand up for what is right, even when it goes against the prevailing culture or authority. Ebed-Melech's advocacy for Jeremiah highlights the impact one person can have in bringing about justice and mercy.

Practical Wisdom. Ebed-Melech's use of old rags to protect Jeremiah shows practical wisdom and care. Believers should seek to be thoughtful and considerate in their actions.

Faithfulness Rewarded. Ebed-Melech's intervention teaches us the importance of standing up for righteousness and helping those in need, even when it requires

personal risk. Ebed-Melech's faithfulness is later rewarded by God. This encourages believers to remain faithful, knowing that God sees and rewards our actions.

Faithfulness in Trials. Jeremiah's continued faithfulness, even when imprisoned, encourages us to remain steadfast in our faith during difficult times.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

1. How does the account of Jeremiah in the cistern challenge your understanding of suffering and God's faithfulness? How does it reflect the challenges we face in our spiritual lives today?
2. What are some "cisterns" in your life where you need God's deliverance, and how can you seek His help?
3. How can King Zedekiah's indecision and fear of man serve as a warning for us in our leadership roles?
4. How can you apply the lessons from Ebed-Melech's intervention in your daily life, particularly in situations where you witness injustice?
4. How can the example of Ebed-Melech encourage you to show compassion and take action for those who are suffering or marginalized?
5. How does the account of Jeremiah's rescue encourage us to trust in God's deliverance, even when our circumstances seem hopeless?

LESSON TO LIVE BY:

It was not always easy for Jeremiah to speak God's words. His commission was not only dangerous, it was often depressing. We have already been given a clue that the book of Jeremiah does not have a happy ending. It ends with the people of Jerusalem being sent into exile. Thus, the book of Jeremiah is a tragedy rather than a comedy. It is about the unraveling of a nation. It is the sad story of the decline of God's people from faith to idolatry to exile.

The only hope for the sinful human heart is to be supernaturally changed. Last week, Jeremiah 31:33 gave us the solution. Where sin was once inscribed on the hearts of his people, God provides a new inscription: "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Jesus came to inaugurate a new covenant so that sins could be forgiven and sinners could be born again (John 3:5). As "desperately wicked" people, we cannot reform our hearts by our own effort. The only solution is for God to make our hearts new, washed clean from sin and fundamentally reoriented toward pleasing him.

Zoom Sunday School Classes – 9 November 2025, 09:00 AM EST

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<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84894230612?pwd=Zk1ESitzbGZwTlJyV21UZXY5aTVPZz09>

Jerusalem's Fall

Printed Text: 2 Kings 24:18-25:9

Devotional Reading: Lamentations 1:18-22

Background Reading: 2 Kings 23:1-25:21

Daily Bible Readings

Monday: The Master Is Coming Soon - Luke 12:42-48

Tuesday: The Purifying Fire of Change - Luke 12:49-53

Wednesday: The Lord's Purifying Purpose - Lamentations 2: 17-22

Thursday: Hope in the Lord - Lamentations 3:21-36

Friday: Faith Tested by Fire - 1 Peter 1:1-12

Saturday: Prepare for Action - 1 Peter 1:13-25

Sunday: God's Judgment Is Sure - 2 Kings 24:18-25:9

KEEP IN MIND:

"Indeed, Jerusalem and Judah so angered the LORD that he expelled them from his presence. Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon." (2 Kings 24:20, NRSV)

LESSON AIM:

EXPLAIN The circumstances which led to the exile.

SUMMERIZE the cycle of obedience and disobedience of the kings prior to the exile.

UNDERSTAND the consequences of disobedience.

BACKGROUND:

Zedekiah was the last king of Judah and was king when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by Babylon in 586 BC and the majority of the people were carried into exile. The story of Zedekiah is told in 2 Kings 24–25, 2 Chronicles 36, and the book of Jeremiah.

Zedekiah's original name was Mattaniah. He was the son of King Josiah and the brother of King Jehoahaz and King Jehoiakim. Zedekiah would not normally have been included in the line to the throne, but the kings preceding him made bad decisions, both spiritually and politically, and were removed in succession. Jehoahaz, son of Josiah, ruled for 3 months and "did evil in the sight of the Lord," and Pharaoh Necho took him to Egypt in exile (2 Kings 23:31–33). Necho put his brother Jehoiakim in his place.

Jehoiakim ruled for 11 years. During his reign, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded. Jehoiakim swore allegiance to him and continued as a vassal king. He also did evil in the Lord's sight (by not removing all of the idols from the land) and then rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. Upon his death, his son Jehoiachin succeeded him (2 Kings 24:1–7).

Jehoiachin continued his father's evil ways. He reigned for 3 months and then was removed from the throne by Nebuchadnezzar. At this point Mattaniah, son of Josiah, was put on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar to rule as a vassal king. Nebuchadnezzar changed his name to Zedekiah (2 Kings 24:8–17).

LESSON COMMENTARY:

Another Evil King (2 Kings 24:18-20, NRSV)

¹⁸Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he began to reign; he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

¹⁹He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, just as Jehoiakim had done.

²⁰Indeed, Jerusalem and Judah so angered the LORD that he expelled them from his presence. Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

Zedekiah, originally named Mattaniah, was the last king of Judah before the Babylonian exile. Appointed by Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon, Zedekiah's reign was marked by his struggle to maintain autonomy under Babylonian dominance. Zedekiah's reign from 597 to 586 BC was a period of significant upheaval. Jerusalem, the capital of Judah, was under constant threat from Babylon. The eleven-year reign ended with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, fulfilling the prophecies of Jeremiah and others about the consequences of Judah's disobedience to God.

This period is crucial in understanding the transition from the Davidic monarchy to the Babylonian exile. Hamutal was also the mother of Jehoahaz, another king of Judah, indicating her significant role in the royal lineage. The mention of her father, Jeremiah, not to be confused with the prophet, highlights the importance of family connections in the royal court. This Jeremiah was from Libnah, a town in Judah, suggesting that Zedekiah's family had strong ties within the region. Libnah was a Levitical city in the Shephelah region of Judah. Its mention here provides geographical context and emphasizes the Levitical influence in Zedekiah's heritage. The city's history of rebellion against Judah (2 Kings 8:22) may foreshadow Zedekiah's own rebellion against Babylon. This connection underscores the recurring theme of resistance and the consequences of defying God's ordained order.

The anger of the LORD is a recurring theme in the Old Testament, often associated with the covenant relationship between God and Israel. This anger is not arbitrary but is a response to the people's persistent idolatry and disobedience. In Deuteronomy 29:24-28, the LORD's anger is described as a consequence of breaking the covenant.

1. What lessons can we learn from Zedekiah's reign about the importance of obedience to God?

2. How does the account of Zedekiah's leadership challenge us to evaluate our own leadership roles, whether in family, work, or community?

Another Reckless Rebellion (2 Kings 25:1-5, NRSV)

¹And in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came with all his army against Jerusalem, and laid siege to it; they built siegeworks against it all around.

²So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.

³On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine became so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land.

⁴Then a breach was made in the city wall; the king with all the soldiers fled by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, by the king's garden, though the Chaldeans were all around the city. They went in the direction of the Arabah.

⁵But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho; all his army was scattered, deserting him.

This specific date is significant in the Jewish calendar. It marks the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem, a pivotal event in Jewish history. The march against Jerusalem was a decisive military action aimed at quelling rebellion and asserting Babylonian dominance. The phrase "entire army" indicates the seriousness of the campaign and the resources Nebuchadnezzar was willing to commit. This military action was a fulfillment of prophetic warnings given by prophets like Jeremiah, who had foretold the consequences of Judah's disobedience and reliance on foreign alliances instead of trusting in God. The Babylonian army set up camp around Jerusalem, initiating a siege that would last for approximately 18 months.

The fourth month is Tammuz in the Hebrew calendar, corresponding to June-July. The siege of Jerusalem led to a devastating famine, a common consequence of prolonged sieges in the ancient world. The Babylonians cut off supplies, leading to extreme scarcity of food. This dire situation foreshadows the ultimate destruction of the city and the temple, leading to the Babylonian exile, a pivotal moment in Israel's history that would shape their identity and faith.

The breaching of the city walls signifies the fall of Jerusalem, a pivotal event in Jewish history. This breach fulfilled the prophecies of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 21:4-7) and Ezekiel (Ezekiel 24:1-2), who warned of Jerusalem's destruction due to the people's disobedience and idolatry. The Chaldeans, also known as Babylonians, were led by King Nebuchadnezzar. Their siege is part of the larger Babylonian conquest, which was a tool of divine judgment against Judah for its persistent sin (2 Kings 24:2-4). The flight of the soldiers indicates a desperate and chaotic retreat. Despite their duty to defend the city, the overwhelming power of the Babylonian forces led to their escape attempt. This act of fleeing fulfills the prophecy in Jeremiah 39:4, where it was foretold that the king and his soldiers would try to escape.

1. How can we discern and respond to prophetic warnings in our own lives, both from Scripture and through the Holy Spirit?

2. What practical steps can we take to ensure that we are spiritually prepared for times of trial and testing, similar to a siege?

Another Harsh Result (2 Kings 25:6-9, NRSV)

⁶Then they captured the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, who passed sentence on him.

⁷They slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, then put out the eyes of Zedekiah; they bound him in fetters and took him to Babylon.

⁸In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month—which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon—Nebuzaradan, the captain of the bodyguard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem.

⁹He burned the house of the LORD, the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down.

Their seizing of the king, Zedekiah, marks the culmination of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem, which began in 588 BC. This event fulfills the prophecy given by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 34:2-3) that Zedekiah would be captured and delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon. The capture signifies the end of the Davidic reign in Jerusalem, a significant moment in Israel's history. Riblah was a strategic military location in the land of Hamath, north of Israel, used by the Babylonians as a military headquarters. It was

here that Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, held court and made critical decisions regarding his conquests. The transportation of Zedekiah to Riblah underscores the complete control Babylon had over Judah and its king. This movement also fulfills Ezekiel's prophecy (Ezekiel 12:13) that Zedekiah would be taken to Babylon, yet not see it, as he was blinded. The judgment involved the execution of his sons before his eyes and then his own blinding, ensuring that the last sight he saw was the death of his lineage. This act of judgment was not only a political statement but also a fulfillment of divine prophecy, as God had warned through His prophets that disobedience would lead to such consequences (Jeremiah 21:7). The judgment reflects the broader theme of divine justice and the consequences of breaking covenantal promises.

The blinding of Zedekiah serves as a metaphor for the spiritual blindness of Judah, which had turned away from God despite numerous warnings from the prophets. Bronze shackles indicate the severity of Zedekiah's captivity, as bronze was a strong metal, symbolizing the unbreakable nature of his bondage. This imagery reflects the complete subjugation of Judah under Babylonian rule. The use of bronze, often associated with judgment in the Bible, underscores the divine judgment upon Zedekiah and Judah for their disobedience and idolatry.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER

1. How does Zedekiah's reign illustrate the consequences of disobedience to God's commands, and what can we learn from this for our own lives?
2. In what ways can we ensure that we are listening to and heeding God's guidance, especially when it comes through others?
3. How does the influence of family and upbringing impact our spiritual journey, and how can we cultivate a godly legacy for future generations?
4. What role do prophets and spiritual leaders play in our lives today, and how can we discern true guidance from God?
5. How can we find comfort and assurance in God's sovereignty, even when facing difficult or uncertain circumstances?

LESSON TO LIVE BY:

We must understand the consequences of disobedience. Zedekiah's reign serves as a reminder of the severe consequences that come from disobeying God's commands and ignoring prophetic warnings. As a leader, Zedekiah's failure to lead his people in righteousness highlights the importance of godly leadership and the impact it has on a nation. Zedekiah's lack of faithfulness underscores the need for leaders who seek God's guidance and adhere to His commandments. The account of Zedekiah is intertwined with the prophetic messages of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, illustrating the critical role prophets play in guiding and warning God's people. As a people of God, we must trust in God's sovereignty. Despite the chaos and destruction during Zedekiah's reign, God's sovereign plan was at work, reminding us to trust in His ultimate control over history.

Zoom Sunday School Classes – 16 November 2025, 09:00 AM EST

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Ezekiel's Sign

Printed Text: Ezekiel 3:10-11; 24:15-24, 27

Devotional Reading: 2 Corinthians 1:2-6

Background Reading: Ezekiel 1-3; 2:1-3:27; 8:1-4; 11:22-25; 24:15-24; 33:30-33

Daily Bible Readings

Monday: With Righteousness comes suffering - 1 Peter 3:8-17

Tuesday: Christ Exalted through suffering - 1 Peter 3:18-22

Wednesday: God Rescues us from our Afflictions - Psalm 34:6-19

Thursday: Comfort for the Brokenhearted - Matthew 5:3-12

Friday: Speak if people Listen or Not - Ezekiel 3:4-11

Saturday: Steadfastness amid persecution 2 - Thessalonians 1:1-4

Sunday: Unspeakable Grief - Ezekiel 24:15-27

KEEP IN MIND:

“He said to me: Mortal, all my words that I shall speak to you receive in your heart and hear with your ears.” (Ezekiel 3:10, NRSV)

LESSON AIM:

EXPLORE God's call of Ezekiel;

AFFIRM that like Ezekiel, we have an obligation to speak to people who obstinately refuse to listen; and

SHARE ways to be “harder than flint” in obeying God's call to be His messengers.

Background

Ezekiel was a priest in Jerusalem at the end of the kingdom of Judah, as well as a contemporary of Jeremiah. Because he had authority, he was exiled to Babylon along with King Jehoiachin in 567 BC at the age of 25. His first vision (Jeremiah 1) is reported to have taken place five years later (592 BC) while in exile along the Chebar Canal, which connected with the Euphrates in the Nippur region. When his beloved wife died suddenly, he focused on his prophetic calling instead of bereavement, demonstrating that God's will over our lives takes precedence over every other duty, including mourning for a loved one, building, city, or past life (Ezekiel 24:15-25). The death of the prophet's wife was a sign of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans and the loss of the Temple. God may take all that seems dearest to us, but Ezekiel demonstrates that we should not weep for our afflictions, but yield our broken heart and mourner's prayers as acceptable before God to renew our hope. Ezekiel humbly submitted and followed God's instructions. He could then speak God's Word, and his example

generated great respect among the Hebrew exiles and confirmed him as a prophet of God. His message was that the real spiritual temple is in the hearts of God's people; they must be willing to obey, listen, and be broken for a greater eternal hope.

LESSON COMMENTARY:

People's Response (Ezekiel 3:10-11, NRSV)

¹⁰He said to me: Mortal, all my words that I shall speak to you receive in your heart and hear with your ears;

¹¹then go to the exiles, to your people, and speak to them. Say to them, "Thus says the Lord God"; whether they hear or refuse to hear.

The Lord desires that Ezekiel take to *heart* what he is now hearing. The prophet has already taken to "belly" and "bowels" these words (Ezekiel 3:3), and the inclusion of heart stresses how complete Ezekiel's reception of the Lord's message must be.

The words of Psalm 119:11 are applicable: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Ezekiel may be in captivity on foreign soil, but God's Word is in no way held captive (see 2 Timothy 2:9).

The Lord has spoken of Ezekiel's audience as "impudent," "hardhearted," and "rebellious." These add to their depiction as "briers and thorns" and "scorpions" in Ezekiel 2:6. Now, as the Lord's commission to Ezekiel comes to its conclusion, He describes them in somewhat softer terms.

First, they are them of the captivity. They are fellow exiles with Ezekiel; they suffer with him the same discouraging circumstances. Second, the Lord refers to them as *the* children of thy people. Because of their stubborn disobedience and refusal to heed prophets like Ezekiel, they deserve to be where they are. But they are still Ezekiel's kin; he shares with them a common identity as part of the covenant people. Ezekiel undoubtedly views them with the same compassion that moves the apostle Paul to say centuries later, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Romans 9:3).

At the same time, Ezekiel's compassion must not be allowed to alter the Lord's message. Ezekiel still must declare, *Thus saith the Lord God*. Resistance to the message must not influence the prophet's delivery of it. *Whether they will hear, or ... forbear* makes no difference in that regard. Ezekiel's primary duty is to remain faithful to the Lord's message. His listeners must decide for themselves whether they will do the same.

Ezekiel was called to preach in his own country, to his own people, in his own language, to his fellow Israelites, not the Babylonians. God explained that if he had sent him to minister to the Babylonian captors, "they would listen!" In other words, Israel was more hardened than the worst of the nations around them.

Language barriers can be overcome; but a hardened head and heart are another matter. Ezekiel was not to take it personally when his message from God was rejected; Israel's spiritual deafness was acquired over many years of turning away from His Word. Time after time in the Scriptures, we read of Israel choosing to reject God. This is no different. Regardless of their spiritual receptivity, Ezekiel is called to preach to the people of Judah.

1. How do we know whether or not to move on when the gospel is stubbornly resisted?

Unusual Reaction (Ezekiel 24:15-18 (NRSV))

¹⁵The word of the LORD came to me:

¹⁶Mortal, with one blow I am about to take away from you the delight of your eyes; yet you shall not mourn or weep, nor shall your tears run down.

¹⁷Sigh, but not aloud; make no mourning for the dead. Bind on your turban, and put your sandals on your feet; do not cover your upper lip or eat the bread of mourners.

¹⁸So I spoke to the people in the morning, and at evening my wife died. And on the next morning I did as I was commanded.

God communicated directly to the prophet Ezekiel. Ezekiel, a priest and prophet during the Babylonian exile, often received messages from God that were both symbolic and direct. His role was to convey God's messages to the Israelites, who were in a state of rebellion and idolatry.

These verses refer to Ezekiel's wife, who is described as precious to him. It highlights the personal cost of Ezekiel's prophetic ministry. It also serves as a metaphor for Jerusalem, the "desire" of the Israelites, which would soon face destruction. This dual meaning reflects the intertwining of personal and national tragedy.

The suddenness and severity of the event reflect the abruptness of God's judgment on Jerusalem. Ezekiel is commanded to refrain from traditional mourning practices, which would have been expected in his culture. This unusual directive serves as a sign to the people of Israel, illustrating the depth of their spiritual desolation and the inevitability of God's judgment. We are called to prioritize God's will over personal desires, as seen in Jesus' teachings on discipleship and sacrifice.

Ezekiel is instructed not to engage in customary mourning practices, which would typically include loud lamentations and public displays of grief. This command serves as a prophetic sign to the Israelites, illustrating the severity of the coming destruction, where there will be no time or opportunity for traditional mourning. This is reminiscent of Jeremiah 16:5-7, where God also forbids mourning as a sign of judgment.

Speaking in the morning suggests a time of new beginnings or revelations. Morning was a common time for public gatherings, making it an ideal time for Ezekiel to address the people. This phrase indicates the urgency and importance of the message he was delivering, as mornings were typically associated with the start of daily activities and communal life.

The death of Ezekiel's wife serves as a symbolic act within his prophetic ministry. In the cultural context, the evening was a time of rest and reflection, contrasting with the morning's activity. The suddenness of her death underscores the abruptness of God's impending judgment on Jerusalem. This event parallels the destruction of the temple, which was deeply cherished by the Israelites, much like Ezekiel's wife was to him. The personal loss reflects the communal loss that the Israelites would experience.

Ezekiel's obedience to God's command, despite his personal grief, highlights his role as a faithful prophet. This act of compliance serves as a powerful testimony to the Israelites, demonstrating the importance of prioritizing God's will over personal desires. The command likely involved refraining from traditional mourning practices, which would have been a shocking deviation from cultural norms. This obedience is reminiscent of

other biblical figures who followed God's commands despite personal cost, such as Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac. It also prefigures Christ's obedience to the Father, even unto death.

Sobering Prophecy (Ezekiel 24:19-23, NRSV)

¹⁹Then the people said to me, "Will you not tell us what these things mean for us, that you are acting this way?"

²⁰Then I said to them: The word of the LORD came to me:

²¹Say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: I will profane my sanctuary, the pride of your power, the delight of your eyes, and your heart's desire; and your sons and your daughters whom you left behind shall fall by the sword.

²²And you shall do as I have done; you shall not cover your upper lip or eat the bread of mourners.

²³Your turbans shall be on your heads and your sandals on your feet; you shall not mourn or weep, but you shall pine away in your iniquities and groan to one another.

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²³Your turbans shall be on your heads and your sandals on your feet; you shall not mourn or weep, but you shall pine away in your iniquities and groan to one another.

Ezekiel often acted out symbolic actions as part of his prophetic ministry, which was a common practice among prophets to convey God's messages. The people's inquiry suggests that Ezekiel's actions were striking enough to provoke curiosity and concern. This reflects the role of a prophet as a mediator between God and His people, tasked with delivering divine messages in ways that capture attention and provoke reflection.

The people's request for an explanation highlights their desire for understanding and clarity. It underscores the importance of interpretation in prophetic ministry, as the symbolic actions often required explanation to be fully understood. This also points to the responsibility of spiritual leaders to provide guidance and clarity to their communities. The people are not just curious about the actions themselves but are concerned about their implications for their own lives. This reflects the broader context of Ezekiel's ministry, which was to address the spiritual and moral state of Israel during a time of impending judgment and exile. The question also suggests an awareness of the potential consequences of their actions and the need for repentance. This inquiry can be seen as a moment of introspection, where the people are prompted to consider their relationship with God and the covenant.

The "house of Israel" refers to the collective people of Israel, emphasizing their identity as God's chosen people. The phrase "the Lord GOD" underscores the divine authority behind the message, indicating that it is not merely a human opinion but a divine decree.

The desecration of the Temple signifies a profound judgment, as it was considered the dwelling place of God among His people. This act represents God's judgment on Israel for their idolatry and unfaithfulness, as the Temple had become a symbol of misplaced trust and pride.

The loss of the Temple would be a devastating blow, akin to losing something cherished and beloved. This reflects the broader biblical theme of idolatry, where the people valued the Temple more than their relationship with God.

The Temple was central to the spiritual life of Israel, a place where they experienced God's presence and favor. Its destruction would not only be a physical loss but a spiritual and emotional one as well.

The mention of "sons and daughters" highlights the personal and familial impact of the judgment, as future generations would suffer the consequences of the nation's sins. This reflects the biblical principle of corporate responsibility and the far-reaching effects of disobedience to God.

God instructed Ezekiel not to mourn publicly for his deceased wife, symbolizing the coming judgment on Jerusalem and the Temple, where traditional mourning would be inappropriate due to the severity of the calamity. This reflects the prophetic role of Ezekiel, where his life and actions were used to communicate divine truths.

By instructing the people not to cover their lips, God was indicating that the destruction of Jerusalem would be so overwhelming that traditional expressions of mourning would be inadequate.

God was emphasizing that the coming disaster would leave no room for customary mourning rituals. This also highlights the theme of divine judgment, where normal life and its comforts are disrupted. The absence of mourning practices points to the totality of the loss and the need for repentance rather than ritual.

The groaning signifies the internalized grief contrasts with the external mourning that is forbidden, indicating a deep, personal suffering. The groaning is a fulfillment of the prophetic warnings given by Ezekiel and other prophets, who repeatedly called the people to repentance and the hope of restoration through God's mercy.

Ezekiel's role as a sign underscores the seriousness of God's message and the certainty of its fulfillment. His life becomes a prophetic drama, illustrating the impending judgment on Jerusalem.

Ezekiel's Role (Ezekiel 24:24, 27, NRSV)

²⁴Thus Ezekiel shall be a sign to you; you shall do just as he has done. When this comes, then you shall know that I am the Lord God.

²⁷On that day your mouth shall be opened to the one who has escaped, and you shall speak and no longer be silent. So, you shall be a sign to them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

The people of Israel are called to mirror Ezekiel's actions, which often included dramatic and difficult acts symbolizing the coming judgment and their own future experiences. The Israelites will undergo similar suffering and loss as Ezekiel, who was commanded to perform acts like lying on his side for extended periods (Ezekiel 4:4-6) and not mourning the death of his wife (Ezekiel 24:16-18). These acts were designed to prepare the people for the severe trials they would face, including the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

The ultimate purpose of the prophetic signs and the ensuing events is to lead the people to a recognition and acknowledgment of God's sovereignty and authority. The judgment serves as both a punishment and a means to bring the people back to a true understanding of their covenant relationship with God. It also foreshadows the ultimate revelation of God through Jesus Christ, who fulfills the law and the prophets, bringing a new covenant and deeper understanding of God's nature and purposes.

Ezekiel's ability to speak symbolizes the completion of a prophetic cycle. His silence had been a sign of impending judgment, and his restored speech indicates a shift towards a message of hope and restoration. This transition is crucial in understanding the role of prophets as both warn and comfort the people.

Ezekiel himself becomes a living sign to the people, embodying the message of God. The covenant relationship between God and Israel, where recognition of God's lordship is central. This acknowledgment is not just intellectual but involves a relational understanding of God's character and authority.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

1. How does Ezekiel's role as a prophet inform our understanding of the importance of delivering God's message accurately today?
2. In what ways can we see the authority of God's word in our own lives, and how should this influence our daily decisions?
3. How does the context of the Babylonian exile help us understand the gravity of Ezekiel's prophecies?
4. What lessons can we learn from the Israelites' response to God's warnings through Ezekiel, and how can we apply these lessons to our spiritual walk?
5. How does the theme of judgment and hope in Ezekiel's message encourage us in times of personal or communal trials?

LESSON IN SOCIETY:

Many adults remember times when a positive experience “sweetened” their lives during discouragement and doubt. Many times, we doubt our ability to overcome hindrances and feel alone in standing up for what is right. We can easily become discouraged when obstacles prevent us from reaching our goals. God wants us to read, study, memorize, pray, and discuss His Word so that we become bold when we speak before a person or crowd.

Zoom Sunday School Classes – 23 November 2025, 09:00 AM EST

Meeting ID: 848-9423-0612

Pass Code: 669872

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84894230612?pwd=Zk1ESitzbGZwTIJyV21UZXY5aTVPZz09>

Ezekiel's Responsibility

Printed Text: Ezekiel 33:7-16

Devotional Reading: Jeremiah 17:5-10

Background: Ezekiel 18:1-32; 33:1-20

Daily Bible Readings

Monday: Love others Despite suffering - 1 Peter 4: 1-11
Tuesday: Rejoice to share Christ's sufferings - 1 Peter 4:12-19
Wednesday: Answering for sin - Ezekiel 18:1-9
Thursday: I Confess My Iniquity - Psalm 38:1-2,10-22
Friday: Restore one Another in Gentleness - Galatians 6:1-10
Saturday: See to Your own sins First - Matthew 7:1-6
Sunday: Let the wicked Repent - Ezekiel 33:7-16

LESSON AIM:

IDENTIFY righteous and unrighteous behavior.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST Ezekiel's role as a watchman in regard to New Testament imperatives.

SEEK God's forgiveness and live in righteousness.

KEEP IN MIND:

"So, you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore, you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me." (Ezekiel 33:7-16, NKJV)

BACKGROUND:

Chapter 33 brings us to the last major division of this book. From chapters 33 -- 48 we will see the glory of the Lord and the coming millennial Kingdom. Chapter 32 concluded the predictions concerning the nations that were round about Israel. Some of these nations were contiguous to the land of Israel. They were very closely related to them, of course -- actually related by blood. These prophecies were given before the destruction of Jerusalem. Now we come to the second part of this prophetic book, which contains Ezekiel's prophecies after the fall of Jerusalem.

Ezekiel again is speaking of Jerusalem, and the land of Israel will be his subject, but his message is different. Up to chapter 25 everything pointed to the destruction of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem was destroyed exactly as he had predicted. Now he will look forward to the future of the coming millennial Kingdom when the glory of the Lord will be seen again on this earth. That makes this a very interesting section.

LESSON COMMENTARY:

A Watchman to the Exiles (Ezekiel 33:7-9, NKJV)

⁷"So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me.

⁸When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked *man*, you shall surely die!' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I

will require at your hand.

⁹Nevertheless if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.

The responsibility of the watchman is to warn the wicked that they are going to be judged. Ezekiel was faithful in giving the warning, although the people would not listen to him. To sound the warning was the only way the watchman could clear himself.

The prophet is a watchman to the house of Israel. His business is to warn sinners of their misery and danger. He must warn the wicked to turn from their way, that they may live.

If souls perish through his neglect of duty, he brings guilt upon himself. See what those have to answer for, who make excuses for sin, flatter sinners, and encourage them to believe they shall have peace, though they go on. How much wiser are men in their temporal than in their spiritual concerns! They set watchmen to guard their houses, and sentinels to warn of the enemies' approach, but where the everlasting happiness or misery of the soul is at stake, they are offended if ministers obey their Master's command, and give a faithful warning; they would rather perish, listening to smooth things.

1. How does the role of a watchman in Ezekiel's time compare to the role of believers today in sharing the Gospel?
2. What are some practical ways you can fulfill your responsibility to warn others of sin in your community?
3. How does understanding the accountability described in Ezekiel 33:8 affect your approach to evangelism and discipleship?
4. In what ways can the church collectively act as a watchman in today's society?
5. How do the principles in Ezekiel 33:8 relate to Jesus' teachings in Matthew 18:15-17 about confronting a brother in sin?

Warning the Israelites (Ezekiel 33:10-16, NKJV)

¹⁰"Therefore you, O son of man, say to the house of Israel: 'Thus you say, "If our transgressions and our sins *lie* upon us, and we pine away in them, how can we then live?" '

¹¹Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'

¹²"Therefore you, O son of man, say to the children of your people: 'The righteousness of the righteous man shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression; as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall because of it in the day that he turns from his wickedness; nor shall the righteous be able to live because of *his righteousness* in the day that he sins.'

¹³When I say to the righteous *that* he shall surely live, but he trusts in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous works shall be remembered; but because of the iniquity that he has committed, he shall die.

¹⁴Again, when I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' if he turns from his sin and does what is lawful and right,

¹⁵*if* the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the

statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die.

¹⁶None of his sins which he has committed shall be remembered against him; he has done what is lawful and right; he shall surely live.

Those who despaired of finding mercy with God, are answered with a solemn declaration of God's readiness to show mercy. The ruin of the city and state was determined, but that did not relate to the final state of persons. God says to the righteous, that he shall surely live. But many who have made profession, have been ruined by proud confidence in themselves. Man's trust to his own righteousness, and presuming on his own sufficiency, is brought to commit iniquity. If those who have lived a wicked life repent and forsake their wicked ways, they shall be saved. Many amazing and blessed changes have been brought about by the power of Divine grace. When there is a settled separation between a man and sin, there shall no longer be a separation between him and God.

Each individual is responsible for their own actions. Righteousness is not a one-time achievement but a continual pursuit. Righteous individuals must guard against complacency, as past righteousness does not guarantee future security. There is always hope for the wicked if they choose to repent and turn from their ways. God's grace is available to all who seek it. Both the righteous and the wicked are called to persevere in their respective paths—righteousness must be maintained, and repentance must be genuine and sustained. God's justice ensures that each person is judged according to their actions, but His mercy offers redemption to those who turn to Him.

True repentance involves a complete turning away from sin and a commitment to live righteously. This transformation is possible through God's grace. God's promise to not hold past sins against the repentant sinner highlights His mercy and willingness to forgive. This should encourage believers to seek forgiveness and live in righteousness. The call to do what is just and right is a continuous journey. Believers are encouraged to align their actions with God's standards, reflecting His character in their daily lives. The assurance that the repentant will "surely live" provides hope and motivation for believers to pursue a life of holiness, knowing that God honors and rewards such a life. In the broader context of Ezekiel 33, believers are reminded of their responsibility to warn others of sin and the need for repentance, acting as spiritual watchmen in their communities.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

1. How does Ezekiel's role as a watchman apply to modern-day Christians in their communities and relationships?
2. What are some practical ways we can warn others about the consequences of sin while showing love and compassion?
3. How does the promise of life in Ezekiel 33:15 encourage us in our journey of faith and obedience?
4. In what ways can we ensure that we are not only warning others but also living in a way that reflects obedience to God's commands?
5. How can we draw strength and courage from other scriptures when faced with the challenge of warning others about sin and judgment?

LESSON IN SOCIETY:

Righteousness is not a one-time achievement but a continual pursuit. Believers must remain vigilant in their walk with God. Turning from righteousness to sin has serious consequences, including spiritual death. This serves as a warning to remain steadfast. While this warns of death for iniquity, the broader biblical account offers repentance as a path back to life and restoration with God. Believers are called to hold each other accountable, encouraging one another to remain faithful and turn back to God when they stray. Despite the warning, the Bible assures us that God is faithful to forgive those who repent and seek His mercy.

Zoom Sunday School Classes – 30 November 2025, 09:00 AM EST

Meeting ID: 848-9423-0612

Pass Code: 669872

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84894230612?pwd=Zk1ESitzbGZwTIJyV21UZXY5aTVPZz09>

Ezekiel's Vision

Printed Text: Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12

Devotional Reading: Revelation 7:9-17

Background: Ezekiel 47:1-12

Daily Bible Readings

Monday: God Breathes New Life - Ezekiel 37:1-7

Tuesday: A Resurrection of Hope - Ezekiel 37:8-14

Wednesday: The Thirsty will Be Refreshed - Isaiah 55:1-9

Thursday: Rivers of Living water - John 7:2-10, 37-39

Friday: Hope for God's New creation - Revelation 21 :1-7

Saturday: The Tree of Life - Revelation 22:1-5

Sunday: The River of Life - Ezekiel 47: 1-9,12

KEEP IN MIND:

"On the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing." " (Ezekiel 47:12, NRSV).

LESSON AIM:

ANALYZE the references to water in Ezekiel's vision;

REFLECT on God's ability to refresh and to heal; and

CELEBRATE the influence of God on all creation (humankind and nature).

Background

God's sovereignty is a major theme of Ezekiel. But the Sovereign God is also a God who wants to be known by His people. In Ezekiel, alone, there are 65 occurrences of the clause (or variations): "Then they will know that I am the Lord." Chapters 1-24 reveal God in the fall of Jerusalem and the ensuing national destruction. Chapters 25-32 teach God's revelation of Himself through His judgments upon the nations, and chapters 33-48 emphasize God's character through the restoration and renewal of Israel—both literally and spiritually.

It is in the context of this last section that Ezekiel receives a multipart vision of the new temple of God that is to come. In today's lesson, we will examine the last part of Ezekiel's "temple tour" where Ezekiel was standing just inside the gate of the temple and saw the river flowing from under the temple.

LESSON COMMENTARY:

The Rise of the River (Ezekiel 47:1-6, NRSV)

¹Then he brought me back to the entrance of the temple; there, water was flowing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east); and the water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar.

²Then he brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east; and the water was coming out on the south side.

³Going on eastward with a cord in his hand, the man measured one thousand cubits, and then led me through the water; and it was ankle-deep.

⁴Again he measured one thousand, and led me through the water; and it was knee-deep. Again he measured one thousand, and led me through the water; and it was up to the waist.

⁵Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross, for the water had risen; it was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be crossed.

⁶He said to me, "Mortal, have you seen this?" Then he led me back along the bank of the river.

Ezekiel's third vision begins with him standing in the inner court of the new temple in Jerusalem. He saw water coming out from under the temple, flowing from the side of the altar. In Revelation 22:1, we also see "the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb." It is significant that this river proceeds from where God dwells. He is the Source. This river flows directly from the very presence of Almighty God, Himself. Therefore, the river is able to give life and sustenance. The flow of God's Spirit, through Jesus, then, brings energizing life and healing to those who will accept it.

As the river flowed from the temple and over the mountains, instead of eventually waning to a trickle, it gained in depth and strength. Ezekiel, in his vision, waded into the river. It was ankle-deep (v. 3). A little further downstream, the river was knee-deep (v. 4). One final check revealed that the river was so deep that "no one could cross" (v. 5).

And so it is with our spiritual life. When we first begin our relationship with God, we wade out ankle-deep. We learn the first things about God. As we begin to mature, we

search out the deeper things of God that require some "knee-deep" wading into the river. And then there are some things that we will never fully understand, and we must be content to say with the apostle Paul, "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!" (Romans 11:33).

1. How does the vision of water flowing from the temple in Ezekiel 47:1 relate to the concept of spiritual life and growth in your own life?
2. How does the increasing depth of the river in Ezekiel 47:4 reflect your current spiritual journey and growth?

The Result of the River (Ezekiel 47:7-12, NRSV)

⁷As I came back, I saw on the bank of the river a great many trees on the one side and on the other.

⁸He said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah; and when it enters the sea, the sea of stagnant waters, the water will become fresh.

⁹Wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish, once these waters reach there. It will become fresh; and everything will live where the river goes.

¹²On the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing."

The waters that proceed from God have a healing, restorative effect. Even the lowest, saltiest body of water in the world, the Dead Sea, will be made fresh by the healing river of God (v. 8). In the very end, when God finally establishes His kingdom in fullness, life will truly exist in abundance. In place of this "dead" water, where no life can be sustained, there will be "swarms of living creatures" (v. 9,). This signifies great provision for humankind—fishermen will stand along the shore, from one end of the country to the other, to fill their nets with the abundance of fish (v. 10). Fruit trees of all kinds will bear bountiful crops—a different kind of fruit every month, because "the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve as food and their leaves for healing" (v. 12).

The water of the sanctuary... oh, that it would flow over us! Today, God desires to give us a foretaste of the fullness of life to come. We constantly need the healing, reviving presence of God in our lives. How we need His grace, His healing, His forgiveness in our lives to wash away the stagnant, dead waters of our lives. Only when we bask in His presence and soak up the living water of His words will we become bountifully fruitful servants of God.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

1. How does the concept of continual fruitfulness challenge you in your personal walk with God?
2. What areas of your life need the healing that the leaves in Ezekiel's vision represent, and how can you seek God's restoration?
3. How do the connections between Ezekiel 47:12 and other scriptures like

Revelation 22:1-2 and John 4:14 deepen your understanding of eternal life and spiritual sustenance?

4. Why is it significant that the wellspring of the river was at the temple? How can we liken this river to our lives?

5. What happened when the river flowed into the Dead Sea? What happens when God's Spirit is allowed to flow unhindered in our lives?

LESSON IN SOCIETY:

According to scientists, 97 percent of all water on Earth is salty. Another two percent of Earth's water is ice, leaving about one percent of all water on Earth for human use. Water conservation and pollution are major concerns in our world today; yet we have approximately the same quantity of water that has cycled continuously for centuries. King Solomon took note of this when he wrote, "All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again" (Ecclesiastes 1:7). God has blessed all of humanity—both saved and sinner—with the life-giving gift of water.

We've all seen the pleas for help from Third World countries. Their people are dying for lack of pure water. God's people should not be hardened to the plight of these nations, but we should do what we can to help. God calls believers to hold out a cup of cold water to those who are thirsty—both literally and spiritually.

God's Living Water is available to quench the thirsty souls of those around us. God's well will never run dry; His river will never be dammed up. But it's up to us to lead the lost and dying to the water's Source—God.

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