

11:1-13 Judgment of Punishment on Israel's Leaders:

11:1 And a wind / Spirit lifted me up, and it brought me to a gate of YHWH's house, the eastern one, the one facing to (the) east. And look...in (the) opening of the gate (were) twenty and five man / men. And I saw in their midst Yaazneyah, son of Azzur; and Pelatyahu, son of Benayahu, officers of the people. 11:2 And He said to me, Son of Adam / Humanity, these (are) the men, the ones planning trouble / sorrow / wickedness; and the ones counseling evil counsel in this city. 11:3 They are) the ones saying not to build houses soon--it (Jerusalem) is the pot, and we are the flesh! 11:4 Therefore, proph-esy concerning / against them! Prophecy, Son of Adam / Humanity! 11:5 And YHWH's Spirit fell upon me. And He Said to me, Say, In this way YHWH Spoke: In this way you have spoken, House of Israel--and what comes up (in) your (plural) spirit, I Know it! 11:6 You have multiplied pierced corpses in this city, and you have filled its streets (with) pierced corpse(s)! 11:7 Therefore in this way my Lord YHWH Spoke: Your pierced corpses which you placed in its (Jerusalem's) midst--they (are) the flesh, and it (Jerusalem is) the pot. And you people He Brought Forth from its midst. 11:8 A sword, you (plural) feared; and a sword I Will Bring against you! (It is) a Saying of my Lord YHWH. 11:9 And I Will Bring you Forth from it's (Jerusalem's) midst; and I Will Give / Place you into (the) hand of foreig-ners. And I Will Do / Execute Judgments against you! 11:10 With the sword you will fall upon / at Israel's border! I Will Judge you--and you will know that I (Am) YHWH! 11:11 It (Jerusalem) will not be for you for a pot; and you, will you be in its midst for flesh? To / at Israel's border I Will Judge you! 11:12 And you will know that I (Am) YHWH, in Whose statutes you did not walk, and you did not do My Judgments! And according to (the) judgments of the nations which surround you, you did. 11:13 And it happened as I was prophesying--and Pelatyahu son of Benayah died. And I fell upon my face and I cried out (with) a great voice / sound; and I said, Aha, my Lord YHWH--You Are / Are You Making a Finish to Israel's remnant! / ?

11:1¹

1

Rabbi Fisch comments on **chapter 11** that “Ezekiel’s attention is directed to the scheming and vain confidence of the leading statesmen in the impregnability of Jerusalem. In a Divine communication, couched in the grimmest terms, he is ordered to disillusion them. In the course of the vision he sees that one of the twenty-five men collapsed and died. Ezekiel interprets this incident as so ominous that he is overcome by it and in dismay asks whether God has decreed the total annihilation of Israel...

“He then receives a command to convey to the exiles, whose connection with the holy land was challenged by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, a message of hope. They are to be assured that they would yet be restored to their homeland, cleansed of its abominations, unified in spirit. Then, with a final admonition, the *Merkabah* [Divine chariot] leaves the city and rests on the Mount of Olives. Finding himself back in Babylon and awakened from his vision, Ezekiel relates his experience to his fellow exiles.” (P. 56)

(continued...)

וַתִּשָּׂא אֹתִי רוּחַ

And a wind / Spirit lifted me up,²

וַתִּבֵּא אֹתִי אֶל־שַׁעַר בֵּית־יְהוָה הַקֶּדְמוֹנִי

and it brought me to a gate of YHWH's house, the eastern one,

הַפּוֹנֶה קְרִימָה

the one facing to (the) east.

¹(...continued)

The soon-coming Judgment of destruction upon Jerusalem and its temple is a consequence of the actions of Israel's leaders, who have failed in their task.

Reimer entitles **11:1-13** "Punishment for Civic Authorities." He comments that "The new introduction at **verse 1** seems to interrupt the vision sequence at this point of tension, with [YHWH's] glory poised at the threshold. Ezekiel sees 25 men—a different group from **8:16**, and at a different location. And unlike the previous group, the problem here is not with worship but with politics, although the precise issue at stake remains elusive. The overall impression is that the thing they fear will come upon them (**11:8**; like the Tower of Babel in **Genesis 11:1-9**) and that they have brought Divine Judgment on themselves. This framework helps make sense of the details." (P. 1513)

Darr states that "The text addresses three topics: judgment upon the city's smug leaders, who will suffer the lethal consequences of their own death-dealing crimes against fellow Judeans (**verses 1-13**); a rebuttal of the Jerusalemites' claim that the exiles have been written out of God's history, including words of judgment against the former and hope-filled promises for the latter (**verses 14-21**); and the departure of Yahweh's Glory from the city, followed by Ezekiel's return to the exiles in Babylonia (**verses 22-25**).

"Scholars point to similarities between Ezekiel's account of Yahweh's Glory abandoning the temple and the Neo-Babylonian *Poem of Erra*, a literary classic of the ancient Near East. D. Bodi compares this poem to the **Scroll of Ezekiel** and, more specifically, to the present passage. In *Erra*, the Gods Erra and Marduk become angry at the neglect of their cults, moral decay, the tumult of the peoples, and the threat human beings pose to the Deities. Marduk abandons his shrine; in his absence, Erra, the God of destruction and chaos, destroys Babylon and forces its inhabitants into exile to serve as slaves for seventy years. After only eleven years, however, Marduk's anger abates, and he brings the people back to rebuild Babylon. Similarly, **Ezekiel 8-9** describes the cultic abominations committed in Yahweh's temple, as well as moral and social crimes; and these are presented as justifying Yahweh's abandonment of the city." (P. 89)

2

Rabbi Fisch interprets this as meaning "In a vision the prophet sees himself swept off his feet and carried to another part of the temple...He is now brought to the outer eastern gate which faced the city." (P. 56)

וְהִנֵּה בִּפְתַח הַשַּׁעַר

And look...in (the) opening of the gate

עֲשָׂרִים וַחֲמִשָּׁה אִישׁ

(were) twenty and five man / men.³

וַאֲרָאָה בְּתוֹכָם אֶת־יֶאֱזַנְיָה בֶן־עֶזֶר

And I saw in their midst Yaazneyah, son of Azzur;⁴

וְאֶת־פְּלַטְיָהוּ בֶן־בְּנִיָּהוּ

and Pelatyahu, son of Benayahu,

שָׂרֵי הָעָם:

officers of the people.⁵

11:2 וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי

And He said to me,

בֶּן־אָדָם אֵלֶּה הָאֲנָשִׁים

Son of Adam / Humanity, these (are) the men,

הַחֹשְׁבִים אֹוֶן

the ones planning trouble / sorrow / wickedness;

3

Rabbi Fisch notes that these “are doubtless the same men who worshiped the sun in the inner court (8:16).” (Pp. 56-57) “Doubtless”? We cannot be that sure.

4

See 8:11 where the phrase is “Yaazneyahu, son of Shaphan.” Here it is “Yaazne-yah, son of Azzur.” Hilmer and Rabbi Fisch hold that this is not the same person, but could well be that this is only a slightly different way of spelling his name.

5

Rabbi Fisch holds that these two men mentioned here, Jaazaniah and Pelatiah, “were prominent statesmen and known to the colony in exile.” (P. 57)

Hilmer states that the name Pelatiah means “[YHWH] Delivers.” We think the name may mean “Fugitive of YHWH.”

וְהִיעֲצִים עֲצַת־רָע בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת:

and the ones counseling evil counsel in this city.⁶

11:3 הָאֲמָרִים לֹא בְקָרוֹב בְּנֹת בְּתִים

(They are / Are they) the ones saying not to build houses soon--⁷

6

Rabbi Fisch comments that these men are devising “defiance of the prophet’s warnings and planning a revolt against Babylonian authority which, in fact, ended in disaster. Like Jeremiah (27:12 ff.), Ezekiel condemned rebellion against the king of Babylon as a revolt against God’s will.” (P. 57) This matter will come up again in **chapter 17**.

Reimer comments on **verses 2-3** that “Unfortunately for interpretation, the wicked counsel announced in **verse 2** and quoted in **verse 3** is obscure. **Verse 3a** may be either a statement or a question. If the former, the cauldron and meat metaphor is negative (‘we’re cooked!’); but if the latter, the metaphor is positive (‘we won’t be burned’). Since it is unlikely that being cooked is positive, the imagery is best understood to indicate fear, which led to mistrusting [YHWH]. The metaphor is further developed in **chapter 24**.” (P. 1513)

7

Rabbi Fisch understands this to be the statement of the 25 men under the leadership of Jaazaniah and Pelatiah: “The time is not near to build houses,” literally, “Not in the near (future) the building of houses.” “In their evil counsel, the rebel leaders urge preparation for war with Babylon; consequently normal occupations, such as house-building must be deferred for a later period.” (P. 57)

We say, These Jewish leaders are reacting to the letter of Jeremiah to the Judean exiles, advising them to build houses and plant gardens and marry and build families in Babylon—see **Jeremiah 29:1-9**--for, Jeremiah holds, they will be in Babylon for a total of seventy years.

1 וְאֵלֶּה דִּבְרֵי הַסֵּפֶר

And these (are the) words of the scroll / writing,

אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַח יְרֵמְיָה הַנָּבִיא

which Jeremiah the prophet sent forth

מִירוּשָׁלַם אֶל־יֵתֶר זִקְנֵי הַגּוֹלָה

from Jerusalem to (the) remnant of (the) officials / elders of the captivity,

וְאֶל־הַכֹּהֲנִים

and to the priests,

וְאֶל־הַנְּבִיאִים

and to the prophets,

וְאֶל־כָּל־הָעָם

and to all the people,

(continued...)

⁷(...continued)

אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָה נְבוּכַדְנֶאֱצַר מִירוּשָׁלַם בְּבִלְהָ:

whom Nebukhadnettsar took captive from Jerusalem, in Babylon,

2 אַחֲרַי צֵאת יְכִנְיָה־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַגְּבִירָה

after Yeconyah the king, and the queen's going forth,

וְהַפְּרִיסִים שְׂרֵי יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַם

and the eunuchs, leaders of Judah and Jerusalem,

וְהַחֲרָשׁ וְהַמְּסַנֵּר מִירוּשָׁלַם:

and the metal-worker(s) and lock-smith(s) from Jerusalem;

3 בְּיַד אֶלְעָשָׂה בֶן־שָׁפָן וְגִמְרִיָּה בֶן־חִלְקִיָּה

by (the) hand of Elasah, Shaphan's son, and Gemaryah, son of Chilqiyyah;

אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַח צִדְקִיָּה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה

whom Tsidqiyyah, king of Judah, sent forth

אֶל־נְבוּכַדְנֶאֱצַר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל

to Nebukhadnettsar, king of Babylon,

בְּבִלְהָ לְאֹמֵר:

in the (City of) Babylon, saying:

4 כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

In this way YHWH of Armies, God of Israel, spoke

לְכָל־הַגּוֹלָה

to all those taken captive,

אֲשֶׁר־הִגְלִיתִי מִירוּשָׁלַם בְּבִלְהָ:

whom I Sent Away captive from Jerusalem, in the (City of) Babylon:

5 בְּנוּ בָתִּים וּשְׁבוּ

Build houses, and settle down!

וְנִטְעוּ גִנּוֹת וְאָכְלוּ אֶת־פְּרִיָן:

And plant gardens and eat their fruit!

6 קַחוּ נָשִׁים וְהוֹלִידוּ בָנִים וּבָנוֹת

Take wives, and give birth to sons and daughters!

וְקַחוּ לְבָנֵיכֶם נָשִׁים

And take wives for your sons!

וְאֶת־בָּנוֹתֵיכֶם תִּנּוּ לְאֲנָשִׁים

And give your daughters to men,

וְתִלְדְּנָה בָנִים וּבָנוֹת

and let them give birth to sons and daughters!

(continued...)

⁷(...continued)

וּרְבוּ-שָׁם

And become numerous there!

וְאַל-תִּמְעָטוּ:

And don't become fewer in number!

7 וּדְרְשׁוּ אֶת-שְׁלוֹם הָעִיר

And seek prosperity (for) the city

אֲשֶׁר הִגַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה

where I Have Removed you!

וְהִתְפַּלְלוּ בְעֵדָה אֶל-יְהוָה

And pray for it, to YHWH!

כִּי בְשֻׁלוֹמָהּ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם שְׁלוֹם:

For in its prosperity will be your prosperity!

8 כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

For in this way YHWH of Armies, God of Israel, Has Spoken:

אַל-יִשְׂיֵאוּ לָכֶם נְבִיאֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר-בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְקִסְמֵיכֶם

Don't let your prophets in your midst deceive you, or your fortune-tellers;

וְאַל-תִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶל-חֲלֻמֹתֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם מַחְלֹמִים:

and don't listen to your dreams which you are causing to be dreamed!

9 כִּי בְשֶׁקֶר הֵם נְבִאִים לָכֶם בְּשֵׁמִי

Because with falsehood they are prophesying to you in My name;

לֹא שְׁלַחְתִּים

I Have Not Sent them!

נְאֻם-יְהוָה:

–(it is) a Saying of YHWH!

Hilmer comments that “The residents of Jerusalem who were not exiled in 597 B.C.E. felt smugly secure, thinking that nothing worse would befall them.” (P. 1240) YHWH tells Ezekiel to sharply reject their view. The City of Jerusalem is going to be destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and it is YHWH Who Has Sent him. The exiles in Babylon can expect their captivity to last for 70 years—and it is their duty to listen to the letter sent to them by Jeremiah, telling them to settle down and make Babylon their home, praying for its welfare. They must not listen to the false prophets who are advising them to not build homes, but to get ready to return from exile. It isn't going to happen!

Darr asks, “What is the meaning of the officials' ostensible [stated or appearing to be true, but not necessarily so] statements? Although the phrase ‘build houses’ can, in other contexts, refer metaphorically to establishing families (e.g. **Deuteronomy 25:9**; **Ruth 4:11**; **Proverbs 24:27**), it is best construed literally here. But why is this not the time to build? Are the officials boasting of their appropria-
(continued...)

הִיא הַסִּיר וְאַנְחָנוּ הַבָּשָׂר:

it (Jerusalem) is the pot, and we are the flesh!⁸

11:4 לָכֵן הִנְבֵּא עֲלֵיהֶם

Therefore, prophesy concerning / against them!

הִנְבֵּא בֶן־אָדָם:

Prophesy, Son of Adam / Humanity!⁹

11:5 וַתִּפֹּל עָלַי רוּחַ יְהוָה

And YHWH's Spirit fell upon me.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי אָמֹר

And He Said to me, Say,¹⁰

⁷(...continued)

tion of the exiles' properties? Or are they acknowledging that all of the city's resources are best used securing Jerusalem from attack? The following two assertions are metaphorical, and their meaning also is not immediately apparent to the reader. Do they convey the officials' sense of security, that they are choice cuts of meat safely stewing within a cooking pot or preserved in a storage vessel (the city's protective walls)?

8

Rabbi Fisch comments that "In assuring themselves of the adequate protection which the walls of Jerusalem would afford them in the event of an attack by the army of Babylon, the planners of the rebellion used a simile familiar at the time. The pot protects the flesh within it from the fire, and the meat is only removed after it has been sufficiently cooked. Similarly, the walls of the city would give protection to its inhabitants, and only a natural death, not the sword of the enemy, would end their lives." (P. 57)

Hilmer likewise states that "As in **chapter 24**, Jerusalem is compared to a cooking pot. Those left behind boasted that they were the 'meat,' the choice portions—the inference being that the exiles in Babylon were the discarded bones (see **verse 15**)." (P. 1240)

9

Rabbi Fisch holds that "The repetition expresses the importance of the call to the prophet and the urgency of the Message he is to deliver." (P. 57)

10

(continued...)

כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה

In this way YHWH Spoke:

כֵּן אָמַרְתֶּם בַּיַּת יִשְׂרָאֵל

In this way you have spoken, House of Israel--

וּמַעֲלוֹת רוּחֵיכֶם אֲנִי יֹדְעָתִיהָ:

and what things come up (in) your (plural) spirits, I know it!¹¹

11:6 הַרְבִּיתֶם חֲלָלִים בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת

You have multiplied pierced corpses in this city,

וּמָלֵאתֶם חוּצוֹתֶיהָ חֲלָלִים:

and you have filled its streets (with) pierced corpse(s)!¹²

¹⁰(...continued)

Ezekiel, who has been forbidden to speak, is now commanded by YHWH to speak, answering the erroneous claims of the residents in Jerusalem.

11

Rabbi Fisch holds that YHWH Knows what these leaders are planning, in contrast to what they “put forward publicly as the motives for their plot, viz. restoring the independence of Judea... [He Knows] the true, selfish reasons which were in their mind...The application which these men give to the simile of the caldron and flesh is known to God, says the prophet, but future events will set a different interpretation upon it.” (P. 58)

Darr states that “God knows what ‘the house of Israel’ is thinking, and also what they have done, killing the city’s inhabitants and filling its streets with the slain. Therefore, the Lord God takes up the officials’ metaphors and redefines their referents. Not they, but their victims are the meat within the ‘pot’ (city)...

“Yahweh will remove the officials from the pot-city, and they will fall by the sword they have feared and hoped to avoid within its walls. They will be handed over to foreigners, instruments of God’s Own judgment.” (P. 90)

12

Rabbi Fisch thinks that this is “possibly an allusion to the murder of political opponents who belonged to the pro-Babylonian party (compare **Ezekiel 9:9**).” (P. 58)

לִכְּנֹן כִּי־אָמַר אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה 11:7¹³

Therefore in this way my Lord YHWH spoke:

חַלְלֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר שָׂמַתֶּם בְּתוֹכָהּ

Your pierced corpses which you placed in its (Jerusalem's) midst--

הֵמָּה הַבָּשָׂר וְהִיא הַסֵּר

they (are) the flesh,¹⁴ and it (Jerusalem is) the pot.¹⁵

וְאֶתְכֶם הוֹצִיא מִתּוֹכָהּ:

And you people He Brought Forth from its midst.¹⁶

חֶרֶב יִרְאֶתֶם 11:8

A sword, you (plural) feared;

13

Matties comments on **verses 7-12** that “In two statements, each with its own recognition formula (**verses 10b, 12a**), [YHWH's] Judicial Sentence reverses the image of the pot (**verses 7-12**). The victims have become the meat, and the perpetrators of violence are now exposed to the sword of the invading army as they try to flee (**verses 9, 11**; see also **Jeremiah 52:7-10, 24-27**).” (Pp. 1168-69)

14

Hilmer comments that “The meat, redefined by the prophet [we say, by YHWH], is not those in power in Jerusalem (who will be driven out) but the innocent people they killed.” (P. 1240)

15

Rabbi Fisch comments that “The figure of the pot and flesh is given a new meaning. The corpses of innocent people slain in the streets of Jerusalem will be the flesh which will *remain* in the pot, but they who engineered the rebellion and shed innocent blood will be dragged out of the city to suffer the punishment they deserve.” (P. 58)

16

The last line of **verse 7** is given varying translations, from “but I Will Bring you Forth out of the midst of it” to “but you shall be taken out of it,” to “but I Will Drive you Out of it,” to *καὶ ὑμᾶς ἐξάξω ἐκ μέσου αὐτῆς*, “and you (plural), I Will Lead out of its midst.”

וְחָרַב אֶבְיָא עֲלֵיכֶם

and a sword I Will Bring against you!¹⁷

נֹאם אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה:

(It is) a Saying of my Lord YHWH.

11:9 וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מִתּוֹכָהּ

And I Will Bring you Forth from it's (Jerusalem's) midst;

וְנָתַתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּיַד־זָרִים

and I Will Give / Place you into (the) hand of foreigners.¹⁸

17

Rabbi Fisch comments that “With all their talk about security (**verse 3**), the leaders really feared an attack from Babylon and turned to Egypt for help (**Ezekiel 17:15**). Their fears will be justified by events.” (P. 58)

18

Rabbi Fisch observes that “Their expulsion from the city, spoken of in **verse 7**, is not to end in escape to a safe refuge; they will eventually be captured and slain by the enemy. This was literally fulfilled, as recorded in **2 Kings 25:4-7**.” (Pp. 58-59)

4 וַתִּבְקַע הָעִיר

And the city was broken into;

וְכָל־אֲנָשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה

And all (the) men of the war...

הַלַּיְלָה דְּדָרֶךְ שַׁעֲרָו

by night (by way) of a gate...

וְכָל־אֲנָשֵׁי בֵּין הַחֲמוֹתַיִם

and all (the) men between the two walls,

אֲשֶׁר עַל־גֵּן הַמֶּלֶךְ

which is upon / beside the king's garden...

וּכְשָׂדִים עַל־הָעִיר סָבִיב

and Chaldeans (were) upon / beside the city, all around (it);

וַיֵּלֶךְ דְּדָרֶךְ הָעֲרָבָה:

and he went (in the) way / direction of the Arabah.

5 וַיִּרְדְּפוּ חֵיל־כַּשְׂדִּים אַחַר הַמֶּלֶךְ

And (the) army of Chaldeans pursued (plural verb, singular subject) after the king;

(continued...)

וְעֲשִׂיתִי בְכֶם שְׁפָטִים:

And I Will Do / Execute Judgments against you!

11:10 בַּחֶרֶב תִּפְּלוּ עַל־גְּבוּל יִשְׂרָאֵל

With the sword you (plural) will fall upon / at Israel's border!¹⁹

אֲשַׁפֹּט אֶתְכֶם

I Will Judge you--

וַיִּדְעֻתֶם כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה:

and you will know that I (Am) YHWH!

¹⁸(...continued)

וַיִּשְׁגּוּ אֹתוֹ בְּעֵרְבוֹת יַרְדֵּן

and they overtook him in (the) desert-plains of Jericho.

וְכָל־חֵילוֹ נִפְצוּ מֵעָלָיו:

And all his army was scattered from upon him (plural verb, singular subject).

6 וַיִּתְּפְשׂוּ אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ

And they seized the king,

וַיַּעֲלוּ אֹתוֹ אֶל־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל רִבְלָה

And they brought him up to Babylon's king to Riblah.

וַיִּדְבְּרוּ אֹתוֹ מִשְׁפָּט:

And they discussed with him (Nebuchadnezzar) a penalty.

7 וְאֶת־בָּנָיו צָדְקִיָּהוּ שָׁחַטוּ לְעֵינָיו

And Zedekiah's sons they slaughtered to / in his eye-sight;

וְאֶת־עֵינָיו צָדְקִיָּהוּ עָוְרָ

and Zedekiah's eyes they blinded;

וַיִּאֶסְרֻהוּ בַּנְּחֹשְׁתִּים

and they bound him with bronze (chains);

וַיְבִיֵּאוּהוּ בָּבֶל:

and they brought him (to) Babylon.

11:11²⁰ הִיא לֹא־תִהְיֶה לְכֶם לְסִיר

It (Jerusalem) will not be for you for a pot;

וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ בְּתוֹכָהּ לְבָשָׂר

and you, will you be²¹ in its midst for flesh?

אֶל־גְּבוּל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשַׁפֵּט אֶתְכֶם:

To / at Israel's border I Will Judge you!

11:12 וַיִּדְעֶתֶם כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה

And you will know that I (Am) YHWH,²²

אֲשֶׁר בָּחַקְנִי לֹא הִלַּכְתֶּם

in Whose statutes you did not walk,

וּמִשְׁפָּטַי לֹא עָשִׂיתֶם

and you did not do My Judgments!

וּכְמִשְׁפָּטֵי הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבוֹתֵיכֶם עָשִׂיתֶם:

And according to (the) judgments of the nations which surround you, you did.

11:13 וַיְהִי כַּהֲנַבְּאִי

And it happened as I was prophesying--

20

Rabbi Fisch states that **verse 11** “reverts to the previous warning (**verse 7**) that the walls of Jerusalem afford them no protection, and adds that after their flight from the city they would be the *flesh* which fell into the hands of the invaders.” (P. 59)

21

The Greek translation (**Rahlfs**) adds the negative οὐ μὴ γένησθε, “you will not be”—and is followed by almost all English translations.

22

Rabbi Fisch comments that “When the predicted Judgment is executed, they will realize that God Is Not Indifferent to man’s conduct and that retribution falls upon the wicked.” (P. 59)

וּפְלַטְיָהוּ בֶן־בְּנִיָּה מָת

and Pelatyahu son of Benayah died.²³

וָאֶפֶל עַל־פָּנַי וְאִזְעַק קוֹל־גָּדוֹל

And I fell upon my face and I cried out (with) a great voice / sound;

וָאָמַר אֶהָהָ אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה

and I said, Aha, my Lord YHWH²⁴

23

Rabbi Fisch comments that “Some commentators understand the death of this man as ‘symbolical’ and that it took place soon after the prophecy, as happened with Hananiah, the opponent of Jeremiah (compare **Jeremiah 28:17**). Lofthouse remarks: ‘Far more natural is it to suppose that Ezekiel, by clairvoyance, saw a council which was taking place about this time, felt his spirit roused against it in indignant ‘prophecy,’ and there saw one of its members fall dead, and trembled at the thought of the Judgment which he had been pronouncing.’” (P. 59)

Reimer states that “The impact of the death of Palatiah the son of Benaiah on Ezekiel is not immediately obvious. Perhaps it is due to Ezekiel’s shock at seeing such an immediate Judgment from [YHWH] in fulfillment of his prophecies.” (P.1514)

Darr comments, “While Ezekiel is prophesying, Pelatiah son of Benaiah dies...The notice of his death functions to drive home with inescapable force the truth of the prophet’s words. Ezekiel himself, it seems, is horrified by this event. He falls on his face and cries out, ‘Ah Lord God! You are making a full end of the remnant of Israel!’ Both the **NRSV** and the **NIV** translate his exclamation as a question, in conformity with **9:8**. But the Hebrew text contains no interrogative. Rather, the death of Pelatiah, whose name means ‘Yahweh rescues a remnant,’ forces Ezekiel to answer his own earlier query in the affirmative.” (P. 90)

24

The Hebrew text has the phrase אֶהָהָ אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה, “Alas, my Lord YHWH!” The Greek translation (**Rahlfs**) has οἴμμοι οἴμμοι κύριε, making up a new word in Greek, οἴμμοι, = οἴ μοι; since Theognis and Aristophanes, also in the Greek translation of the **Hebrew Bible** (as here), “alas to me!” found as an inscription on gravestones in Greek speaking countries.

The reason for this strange linguistic phenomenon is that the Jews superstitiously taught that it is a sin to pronounce the name of God—YHWH—even though it occurs over six thousand times in the Hebrew text—and they repointed the four letters in such a way as to cause the reader to pronounce YHWH as אֲדֹנָי, **adhonay**. So when a text like this has אֶהָהָ אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה, they would have to read it as “My Lord, My Lord” if they read the text—hence the change.

(continued...)

כָּלֵה אֶתְּהָ עֲשֵׂה אֶת שְׂאֵרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

You are / Are You making a finish to Israel's remnant! / ?²⁵

**Verses 11:14-21 A Word of Hope in the Midst of Judgment—
a Divinely Given New Heart and Spirit.²⁶**

²⁴(...continued)

But we must be careful to consider what the text is saying concerning Ezekiel. This “prophet of doom” is alarmed / shocked at the thought of the doom coming on one person! Even though he powerfully proclaims the coming of doom, he doesn't expect or want it to come! He hopes and expects that the Message will lead the people to repentance and deliverance!

25

Most English translations take this line to be a question, but we think there is no real indication of such in the Hebrew text. Of course, almost any Hebrew sentence can be turned into a question if the translators so desire—but we say, Be careful—as a rule, only make it a question if the Hebrew itself indicates the interrogative, primarily with the *he*-interrogative.

Rabbi Fisch comments that “Those who were left in Jerusalem after the first invasion in 597 B.C.E. [are here called ‘the remnant of Israel’]. The prophet understood from the incident that the entire population of Israel was to share the fate of Palatiah and perish.” (P. 59)

26

Reimer entitles **verses 14-21**, “Promise of a New Heart, Spirit.” He comments that “Ezekiel's outcry of **verse 13** apparently prompts one of the most important statements of hope in the **Scroll**, one closely connected to the famous ‘new heart’ passage in **Ezekiel 36:22-32**...

“In **11:15** the voice of those left in Judah is heard baiting the exiles. The Divine response of **verse 16** both asserts [YHWH's] Own action in bringing about the exile (I Removed...I Scattered) and redefines the relationship between [YHWH] and the remnant; the real sanctuary is not the temple but [YHWH] Himself. That new relationship is marked by a new spirit and a heart of flesh (**verse 19**) Provided by [YHWH] Himself, which enables faithful living previously impossible with a heart of stone. There is a theological tension in Ezekiel between Divine provision (here and **36:26-27**) and human endeavor (‘make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit,’ **18:31**.)” (P. 1514)

In spite of the necessity for judgment and destruction of both Jerusalem and its temple, the exiles in their foreign lands can rest assured that following the judgment, YHWH will gather the exiles and bring them back to their land of Israel--with a new spirit, and hearts of flesh.

Darr comments that “Like **11:1-13**, **verses 14-21** take the form of a prophetic disputation. Again, God quotes an opinion current among Jerusalem's residents. They have reasoned that the exiles,
(continued...)”

“11:14 And the Word of YHWH Was / Came to me, Saying: 11:15 Son of Adam / Humanity, your brothers, men of your exile, and all Israel’s house, all of it--to whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem said, They are far distant from YHWH! To us it (the land) was given, the land for a possession! 11:16 Therefore say, In this way my Lord YHWH Spoke: If I put them far away in the nations, and if I scatter-ed them in the lands--also I was to them for a little while a Sanctuary, in the lands where they came. 11:17 Therefore say, In this way my Lord YHWH Spoke: And I Will Gather you from the peoples, and I Will Gather / Assemble you from the lands among whom you were scattered; and I Will Give to you (the) land of Israel! 11:18 And they will come there; and they will remove all its detestable things, and all its abominations from it! 11:19 And I Will Give to them one heart; and a new spirit I Will Place in their inward part. And I Will Remove the heart of stone from their flesh; and I Will Give to them a heart of flesh! 11:20 In order that they may / will walk in My Statutes; and My Judgments they will observe / keep, and they will do them! And they will be to Me for a people, and I, I Will Be to them for a God! 11:21 And to (the) heart of their detestable things and their abominations, their heart is going! Their way (of life) I Have Given / Placed on their head(s)! (It is) a Saying of my Lord YHWH!

11:14²⁷ וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר:

And the Word of YHWH was / came to me, Saying:

11:15 בְּנֵי־אָדָם אַחֵיךָ

Son of Adam / Humanity, your brothers,

אֲנָשֵׁי גְלוֹתְךָ

men of your exile,

²⁶(...continued)

far removed from their homeland, are also removed from Yahweh, while they are the recipients of the deportees’ portion of Israel’s inheritance, its land gift from God. This opinion, no less than that expressed in **verse 3**, reflects the self-congratulatory illusions of the city’s inhabitants, whose theological interpretation of reality God will confound, along with Ezekiel’s own horrific conclusion that no remnant will be spared...

“Yahweh, Who is not restricted to Israel’s land but free to be wherever God Wills, acknowledges that the exiles are living among the nations, scattered throughout other countries. But geographical distance does not equal Divine alienation.

27

Rabbi Fisch entitles **verses 14-21** “Message of Comfort Before the *Merkabah*’s [Divine Chariot’s] Departure.” Matties comments on these verses that “If **11:1-13** underlines the assertion that Jerusalem has forfeited its place of privilege, this unit identifies the exilic community as the point of new beginning.” (P. 1169)

וְכָל-בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּלָהּ

and all Israel's house, all of it--²⁸

אֲשֶׁר אָמְרוּ לָהֶם יֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם

to whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem said,

רָחֲקוּ מֵעַל יְהוָה

they were far distant from YHWH!²⁹

לָנוּ הִיא נְתֻנָה

To us it (the land) Was Given,³⁰

28

Matties comments that “Here *the whole house of Israel* is identified exclusively with the exilic community.” (P. 1169)

29

This is a strange claim in the eyes of Ezekiel, whose whole life has been radically transformed by his witnessing the Presence of YHWH among the exiles. Of course, those remaining in Jerusalem, not yet having been taken into captivity, when they heard of Ezekiel's experience, would discount it or reject it.

30

The last three lines of **verse 15** are translated variously as follows:

King James, “they unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, Get you far from the LORD: unto us is this land given in possession.”

Tanakh, “to whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem say, 'Keep far from the LORD; the land has been given as a heritage to us.'”

New Revised Standard, “those of whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, ‘They have gone far from the LORD; to us this land is given for a possession.’”

New International, “the people of Jerusalem have said of your fellow exiles and all the other Israelites, 'They are far away from the LORD; this land was given to us as our possession.'”

New Jerusalem, “to your kinsfolk and to the whole House of Israel, the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, ‘Keep well away from Yahweh. This country has now been made over to us!’”

Rahlfs, οἱ ἀδελφοί σου καὶ οἱ ἄνδρες τῆς αἰχμαλωσίας σου καὶ πᾶς ὁ οἶκος τοῦ Ἰσραηλ συντετέλεσται οἷς εἶπαν αὐτοῖς οἱ κατοικοῦντες Ἱερουσαλημ μακρὰν ἀπέχετε ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῖν δέδοται ἡ γῆ εἰς κληρονομίαν, “The brothers of yours and the men of your captivity, and all the house of Israel are finished off—to whom they said to them, those dwelling in Jerusalem, Keep far distant from the Lord! To us the land has been given for an inheritance!”

(continued...)

הָאָרֶץ לְמִוְרָשָׁה:

the land for a possession!³¹

11:16 לְכֵן אָמַר כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

Therefore say, In this way my Lord YHWH spoke:

כִּי הִרְחַקְתִּים בְּגוֹיִם

If I put them far away in the nations,

וְכִי הִפִּיצוּתִים בְּאֲרָצוֹת

and if I scattered them in the lands—

³⁰(...continued)

Talk about exclusivism! Here it is not a matter of excluding non-Jews, but rather, one of excluding all of their fellow Jews who have been carried off into exile, into the dispersion! Rabbi Fisch comments that “Those left were in possession of the temple, the Abode of God, and had the assurance of His Presence, in Which those gone forth had no part; for to go into a foreign land was to come under the dominion of other Gods.” (P. 60)

Ezekiel’s experience, and his ringing Message acted out in vision-stories, proves the opposite. YHWH can be found and known and served faithfully in a foreign land of exile! There can be full forgiveness, experienced there—see Isaiah 40:1-2--apart from the temple and its sacrifices! YHWH is the God of all the earth, not just of Judah!

Matties comments that “The Jerusalemites claim the land as theirs by using two terms associated with patriarchal and conquest traditions: *given* and *possession*. They claim that to live in the land must be to be near [YHWH].” (P. 1169)

31

Rabbi Fisch comments that “Ezekiel had expressed concern about the fate of the remnant in the capital. He receives in reply a communication from God which relates not only to them, but also to the groups of Israelites scattered in other lands. They, too, are the prophet’s *brethren*, and this term is defined by *the men of thy kindred* which is literally ‘the men of your redemption (*geullah*).’ In this phrase is to be detected the law of the *goel*, ‘the redeemer,’ i.e. the next-of-kin who has the duty of avenging a relative’s violent death, marrying his widow, or acquiring the estate in danger of being lost to the family (compare **Numbers 35:19; Ruth 2:20; Leviticus 25:25**). God has a Thought for all these exiled Israelites.” (P. 60)

וַאֲהִי לָהֶם לְמִקְדָּשׁ מְעַט

also I was to them for a little while a Sanctuary / for a little Sanctuary,³²

32

Matties states that “Although removed from the land and scattered (see also **Leviticus 26:33**), [YHWH] remains a *Sanctuary* for the exiles.” (P. 1169)

Hilmer states that **verse 16** is “a key verse in **Ezekiel**. Although the exiles had been driven from Jerusalem and its sanctuary (the symbol of [YHWH’s] Presence among His people), [YHWH] Himself became their Sanctuary, i.e., He was Present among them. Later Christ also became a substitute for the temple.” (P. 1240) See **John 2:19-21**,

19 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς·

Jesus answered, and he said to them,

λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον

Destroy this temple,

καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερῶ αὐτόν.

and in three days I will raise it up.

20 εἶπαν οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι·

Therefore the Jews said,

τεσσαράκοντα καὶ ἕξ ἔτεσιν οἰκοδομήθη ὁ ναὸς οὗτος,

Forty and six years—this temple was built,

καὶ σὺ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερεῖς αὐτόν;

and you, in three days you will raise it up?

21 ἐκεῖνος δὲ ἔλεγεν

But then he was speaking

περὶ τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ.

about the Temple of his body.

Yes, Jesus became a Sanctuary for the people, especially the unwanted, unclean people of “Galilee of the Nations,” or “Galilee of the Gentiles.” Wherever He went, those unclean people crowded to Him, to be welcomed by Him, and to receive His Healing, Forgiveness, and Teaching—exactly what they were supposed to be able to receive in the temple / sanctuary in Jerusalem. Jesus was acting as a priest, and as a High Priest, in the “unclean” part of Israel, turning it into a Sanctuary by His Body—His physical Presence. Just as Babylon had become a Sanctuary for the Jewish exiles, cast off by their brother Jews remaining in Jerusalem, so Galilee of the Nations / Gentiles had become a Divine Sanctuary for the “people of the land,” the half-breed Samaritans and all others considered unclean sinners, by the Presence of Jesus Christ among them. Do you agree? Why? Why not?

Darr comments that “Yahweh has become a **מִקְדָּשׁ מְעַט**, *miqdash me*(at to them. Scholars debate the meaning of this phrase. Zimmerli discerns in it a reference to ‘the limited forms of a worship practiced far from the sanctuary,’ while Greenberg reasons that ‘since the Divine Presence is fully mani-
(continued...)

בְּאַרְצוֹת אֲשֶׁר-בָּאוּ שָׁם:

in the lands where they came.³³

11:17 לְכֵן אָמַר כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Therefore say, In this way my Lord YHWH Spoke:

וְקִבַּצְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מִן-הָעַמִּים

And I Will Gather you from the peoples,

וְאֶסְפַּתִּי אֶתְכֶם מִן-הָאֲרָצוֹת

and I Will Gather / Assemble you from the lands

אֲשֶׁר נִפְצוּתֶם בֵּינֵם

among whom you were scattered;

וְנָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת-אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

and I Will Give to you (the) land of Israel!³⁴

³²(...continued)

festes only in the Jerusalem sanctuary...the reduced Presence among the exiles is boldly figured as a small sanctuary.' On either interpretation, an ironic contrast is being drawn between the Jerusalemites, who would take their continuing presence in the city as a sign of Divine Favor and a basis for security, and the exiles, so far removed from the traditional site of Divine Presence, but its beneficiaries nonetheless." (P. 91)

33

Rabbi Fisch comments that "To the humiliating allegation of the inhabitants of Jerusalem that the exiles, being far removed from the temple, forfeited the Fatherhood and Protection of God, comes the Divine Retort that they still preserve their relationship to Him by means of their house of worship and houses of learning, each of them serving the purpose of a miniature temple in which the Spirit of God was Present (**Babylonian Talmud, Megillah 29a**). The synagogue is even now called a Little Sanctuary in allusion to this verse." (P. 60)

We insist that this is an anachronistic comment, assuming that the houses of worship (synagogues) and houses of learning (academies) of post-Christian times were in existence in the time of Ezekiel. It is possible that there were the early beginnings of the synagogues and academies, but there is no real biblical evidence for their existence at that early time.

34

(continued...)

11:18 וּבֵאוּ-שָׁמָּה

And they will come there;

וְהִסִּירוּ אֶת-כָּל-שִׁקּוּצֵיהָ

And they will remove all its detestable things,

וְאֶת-כָּל-תּוֹעֲבוֹתֶיהָ מִמֶּנָּה:

and all its abominations from it!³⁵

11:19³⁶ וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם לֵב אֶחָד

And I Will Give to them one heart;

וְרוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם

And a new spirit I Will Place in their inward part.³⁷

³⁴(...continued)

Rabbi Fisch comments that “The inhabitants of Jerusalem had also said, *Unto us is this land given for a possession (verse 15)*. This will prove vain boasting. They will be banished from the land, while the exiles will re-enter it.” (P. 61)

Darr comments that “**Verse 17** addresses Ezekiel’s exilic audience. God intends to regather them and to give them Israel’s land. Back home, they will rid their land of its detestable trappings, the abominations of its former inhabitants.” (P. 91)

She adds, on pp. 91-92, that “For those living in exile, Ezekiel’s words are indeed good news—if the destruction of their beloved city and its inhabitants can be called such, but for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, objects of Yahweh’s wrath and the chapter’s principal focus, these verses constitute a continuation of God’s judgment against them. Articulating the exiles’ far brighter prospects puts the lie to their smug and self-righteous claims to be God’s sole legitimate heirs (**verse 15**).”

³⁵

Rabbi Fisch comments that “Their first act will be to purify the land from the defilement of idolatry.” (P. 61)

³⁶

Matties comments on **verses 19-20** that they “indicate that [YHWH’s] Goal is the reconstitution of a moral community, newly empowered by the Spirit to obey [YHWH’s] Instructions, a people of [YHWH] capable of faithfulness.” (P. 1169)

³⁷

(continued...)

וְהִסְרֹתִי לֵב הָאֲבָן מִבְּשָׂרָם

And I Will Remove the heart of stone from their flesh;

וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם לֵב בָּשָׂר:

and I Will Give to them a heart of flesh!³⁸

11:20 לְמַעַן בְּחַקְתִּי יֵלְכוּ

In order that they may / will walk in My Statutes;

³⁷(...continued)

Rabbi Fisch comments that “Their heart will no longer be divided between worship of God and images, but will be wholly loyal to Him.” (P. 61) Compare **Jeremiah 32:39**,

וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם לֵב אֶחָד וְדֶרֶךְ אֶחָד

And I Will Give to them one heart and one way--

לִירְאָה אוֹתִי כָּל־הַיָּמִים

to revere Me all the days,

לְטוֹב לָהֶם וּלְבְנֵיהֶם אַחֲרֵיהֶם:

for good to them, and to their children after them.

Rabbi Fisch adds that “‘The heart is the seat of the emotions; the spirit is the breath which animates the actions’ (Lofthouse).” (P. 61)

Hilmer comments that YHWH Is Promising “Inner spiritual and moral transformation that results in single-minded commitment to [YHWH] and to His will.” (P. 1240) See **Ezekiel 36:26**,

וְנָתַתִּי לָכֶם לֵב חָדָשׁ

And I Will Give to you a new heart;

וְרוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה אֶתֶן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם

and a new spirit / Spirit I Will Give / Place in your midst.

וְהִסְרֹתִי אֶת־לֵב הָאֲבָן מִבְּשָׂרְכֶם

And I Will Take Away (the) heart of stone from your (plural) flesh.

וְנָתַתִּי לָכֶם לֵב בָּשָׂר:

And I Will Give to you a heart of flesh!

Rabbi Fisch comments that “Their former hard and obstinate heart will be transformed into a sensitive and responsive organ.” (P. 61)

וְאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי יִשְׁמְרוּ וְעָשׂוּ אֹתָם

and My Judgments they will observe / keep, and they will do them!³⁹

וְהָיוּ־לִי לְעָם

And they will be to Me for a people,

וְאֲנִי אֶהְיֶה לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים:

And I, I Will Be to them for a God!⁴⁰, ¹

39

Darr comments that “Obedience to the Lord’s statutes and ordinances will be the consequences of Yahweh’s ‘organ transplant’ and the basis of the covenant God reinstates with this people...Hope-filled words to the exiles give way to a reiteration of judgment against those Jerusalmmites who stand accused of not following the Divine statutes and ordinances (verse 13), and whose hearts are bound to the detestable things and abominations. Their deeds will redound upon their own heads, yet another echo of a pronounced theme in **chapters 7-9.**” (P. 91)

40

Rabbi Fisch comments that “Submission to the Will of God will restore harmonious relationship between Him and His people. The ancient covenant will be renewed.” (P. 61) But is it the “ancient covenant” that will be restored, or a “new covenant”? See **Jeremiah 31:31-34,**

31 הֲנֵה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה

Look—days (are) coming—a saying of YHWH--

וְכָרַתִּי אֶת־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־בֵּית יְהוּדָה בְּרִית חֲדָשָׁה:

and I Will Cut with Israel’s house and with Judah’s house a new covenant--

32 לֹא כַבְרִית אֲשֶׁר כָּרַתִּי אֶת־אֲבוֹתָם

not like the covenant which I Cut with their fathers,

בְּיוֹם הַחֲזִיקִי בְיָדָם לְהוֹצִיאָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

in (the) day I Took Strong Hold by their hand to bring them forth from Egypt-land,

אֲשֶׁר־הָמָּה הִפְרוּ אֶת־בְּרִיתִי

which (covenant) they broke / frustrated—My Covenant!

וְאֲנֹכִי בַעַלְתִּי בָם נְאֻם־יְהוָה:

And I, I Ruled as Husband over them—a Saying of YHWH!

33 כִּי זֹאת הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר אֶכְרַת אֶת־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל אַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים הָהֵם

Because this is the Covenant which I Will Cut with Israel’s house after these days--

נְאֻם־יְהוָה

(it is) a Saying of YHWH--

(continued...)

וְאֶל־לֵב שְׂקוּצֵיהֶם וְתוֹעֲבוֹתֵיהֶם 11:21

And to (the) heart of their detestable things and their abominations,

לִבָּם הֹלֵךְ

their heart is going!⁴¹

⁴⁰(...continued)

נָתַתִּי אֶת־תּוֹרָתִי בְּקִרְבָּם

I Gave / Placed [Greek has δῶσω, Giving, I will Give] My *Torah* in their midst,

וְעַל־לִבָּם אֶכְתֹּבָנָה

and upon their heart I Will Write it.

וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים וְהָמָּה יְהוּדֵי לִי לְעַם:

And I Will Be to them for a God, and they will be to Me for a people!

34 וְלֹא יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ וְאִישׁ אֶת־אָחִיו

And they will not again teach—each one his neighbor, and each one his brother,

לְאָמַר דַּעוּ אֶת־יְהוָה

saying, Know YHWH!

כִּי־כֹלָם יֵדְעוּ אוֹתִי

Because all of them will know Me—

לְמִקְטָנָם וְעַד־גְּדוֹלָם

to their least, and as far as their great one—

נֹאם־יְהוָה

(it is) a Saying of YHWH--

כִּי אֶסְלַח לְעֹנֵיהֶם וְלִחַטָּאתָם לֹא אֶזְכֹּר־עוֹד:

because I Will Forgive their iniquity, and their sin I Will Not Again Remember!

Hilmer states that the lines, “They will be My people, and I Will Be their God” are “the heart of [YHWH’s] covenant promise.” (P. 1240) See **Exodus 6:7**,

וְלִקְחֹתִי אֶתְכֶם לִי לְעַם

And I Will Take you to Myself for a people;

וְהָיִיתִי לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים

and I Will Be to you for a God;

וְיָדַעְתֶּם כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם

and you will know that I (Am) YHWH your God,

הַמּוֹצִיא אֶתְכֶם מִתַּחַת סְבִלֹת מִצְרַיִם:

the One Bringing you Forth from beneath Egypt’s burdens.

דְּרָכָם בְּרֹאשָׁם נָתַתִּי

Their way (of life) I have given / placed on their head(s)!⁴²

נֹאם אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה:

(It is) a saying of my Lord YHWH!

11:22-25 The Glorious Radiance of YHWH Departs from Jerusalem:

“11:22 And the cherubim lifted up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and (the) Glorious Radiance of Israel’s God (was) over them, from above! 11:23 and YHWH’s Glorious Radiance Went Up from over the city’s midst; and It Stood over the mountain which (was) east of the city. 11:24 And (the) Spirit / wind Lifted me Up, and It Brought me to Chaldea to the exiles--in the vision, by God’s Spirit / wind. And the vision which I saw went up from upon me. 11:25 And I told the exiles all (the) Words / Things of YHWH which He Showed me.

11:22⁴³

⁴¹(...continued)

Rabbi Fisch comments that the statement here “refers back to **verse 12**, the inhabitants of Jerusalem...Their heart is divided. On the one hand, they believe in the True God, and on the other, they follow readily the desire of their heart to practice idolatry.” (P. 61)

⁴²

Rabbi Fisch comments that this means “They will suffer the consequences of their deeds.” (P. 62)

Matties comments on **verse 21** that “The final line of the speech reminds the exilic audience that the renewed relationship requires vigilance; transformation is not automatic (as **Ezekiel 18:31** asserts).” (P. 1169)

הִשְׁלִיכוּ מֵעַלְיֶיכֶם אֶת־כָּל־פְּשָׁעֵיכֶם

Throw away from upon yourselves all your transgressions,

אֲשֶׁר פָּשַׁעְתֶּם בָּם

with which you transgressed by them!

וַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם לֵב חָדָשׁ וְרוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה

And make for yourselves a new heart, and a new spirit!

וְלָמָּה תָּמוּתוּ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל:

And for what (reason) will you (plural) die, House of Israel?

⁴³

(continued...)

וַיִּשְׂאוּ הַכְּרוּבִים אֶת־כַּנְפֵיהֶם

And the cherubim lifted up their wings,

וְהָאוּפָנִים לְעִמָּתָם

and the wheels beside them;

וַכְבוֹד אֱלֹהֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל עָלֵיהֶם מִלְּמַעְלָה:

and (the) Glorious Radiance of Israel's God (was) over them, from above!

11:23 וַיַּעַל כְּבוֹד יְהוָה מֵעַל תּוֹךְ הָעִיר

and YHWH's Glorious Radiance went up from over the city's midst;

⁴³(...continued)

Reimer entitles **verses 22-25** “The Glory of [YHWH] Departs.” He comments that The vision concludes on a tragic note: the Departure of [YHWH] of Israel from His city denotes Divine Absence and thus death for the people...Both the action and location confirm that the emphasis falls on Divine Absence from Jerusalem rather than (by inference) Presence with the exiles. [YHWH's] Absence persists until **43:1-5.**” (P. 1514)

But is this really the case? Was not Ezekiel's initial vision that of YHWH's Presence in Babylon, with the exiles? We say that's where the emphasis falls in the **Scroll of Ezekiel!**

Matties comments on these verses that “The temple vision concludes with the Departure of the Throne-Chariot, from the east gate of the temple, through the Kidron Valley, and eastward to the top of the Mount of Olives (**verses 22-23**). The destination of the Glory may be implied by the prophet's transport by the Spirit to the exilic community. The Glory of the God of Israel only Returns in Fullness in **43:1-5**. The vision ends with Ezekiel's return to reality and his report to the exilic community (**verses 24-25**).” (Pp. 1169-70)

Darr comments on the passage, stating that “The cherubim bear aloft God's Glory, which rises above the city, crosses the Kidron Valley, and lands on the Mount of Olives...With its departure, the Spirit returns the prophet to Babylonia and his fellow exiles. Only then does the vision end. Ezekiel tells them all the things that the Lord has shown him.” (P. 92)

Rabbi Fisch entitles **verses 22-23** “The *Merkabah* [Divine Chariot] Leaves for the Mount of Olives.”

He comments that “Having left the city, the *Merkabah* Halted on the Mount of Olives on the east side of the city. Commenting on this text, the Rabbis in **Midrash Rabbah to Lamentations** (Proem xxv) remark, ‘For three years and a half the Divine Presence stayed upon the Mount of Olives, hoping that Israel would repent, but they did not.’” (P. 62) There is nothing in the text to this effect.

וַיַּעֲמֹד עַל-הַהָר

and It Stood / Stopped over the mountain⁴⁴

אֲשֶׁר מִקְדָּם לְעִיר:

which (was) east of the city.⁴⁵

11:24⁴⁶ וַרוּחַ נִשְׂאָתַנִּי

And (the) Spirit / wind Lifted me Up,

וַתְּבִיאֵנִי כְשָׂדֵימָה אֶל-הַגּוֹלָה

And It Brought me to Chaldea to the exiles--

בְּמַרְאֵה בְּרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים

in the vision,⁴⁷ by God's Spirit / wind.

וַיֵּעַל מֵעָלַי הַמַּרְאֵה אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתִי:

and the vision which I saw went up from upon me.

11:25 וַאֲדַבֵּר אֶל-הַגּוֹלָה

And I told the exiles

אֵת כָּל-דְּבָרֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הִרְאֵנִי:

all (the) Words / Things of YHWH which He Showed me.

44

“The “mountain” is, of course, the Mount of Olives, on the east side of Jerusalem.

45

Hilmer comments that this verse is depicting “the final eastward Movement of the Glory (as [YHWH] left His temple), which Stopped above the Mount of Olives.” (P. 1241)

46

Rabbi Fisch entitles **verses 24-25** “End of the Vision.” He comments that “The transportation of the prophet from Babylon to Jerusalem and back had not been actual, but took place in a vision (compare **Ezekiel 8:3**)...When Ezekiel awoke from his vision, he was permitted to reveal to his fellow-exiles all that he had seen and experienced.” (P. 62)

47

The trip from Jerusalem to the exiles is not a literal trip—it is a visionary trip.

Long-Lasting Covenants in the Hebrew Bible

Ezekiel 37:26,

וְכָרַתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית שְׁלוֹם

And I will cut / make for them a covenant of peace,

בְּרִית עוֹלָם יִהְיֶה אִתָּם

a long-lasting covenant will be with them.

וְנָתַתִּים וְהִרְבִּיתִי אֹתָם

And I will give (it) to them, and I will multiply them.

וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־מִקְדָּשִׁי בְּתוֹכָם

And I will place My sanctuary in their midst

לְעוֹלָם:

to long-lasting-time!

Isaiah 61:8,

כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֲהַב מִשְׁפָּט

Because I (am) YHWH—One Who loves justice,

שֹׂנֵא גֹזֵל בְּעוֹלָה

Who hates robbery with offering-up / injustice.

וְנָתַתִּי פְעֻלָּתָם בְּאֵמֶת

And I will give their recompense in true-faithfulness,

וּבְרִית עוֹלָם אֶכְרֹת לָהֶם:

and a long-lasting covenant I will cut for them!

Jeremiah 32:40,

וְכָרַתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית עוֹלָם

And I will cut for them a long-lasting covenant

אֲשֶׁר לֹא־אָשׁוּב מֵאַחֲרֵיהֶם

which I will not turn back from following after them;

לְהַיְטִיבִי אֹתָם

to do good to them,

וְאֶת־יְרֵאָתִי אֶתֵּן בְּלִבְכֶם

and I will place my fear / reverence in their heart,

לְבַלְתִּי סוּר מֵעָלָי:

so as not to turn away from Me!

וְהָיְתָה הַקֶּשֶׁת בְּעָנָן

And the bow will be in the cloud;

וּרְאִיתִיהָ
and I will see it,
לְזִכֹּר בְּרִית עוֹלָם
to remember a long-lasting covenant
בֵּין אֱלֹהִים וּבֵין כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה
between God and (between) every live innermost being
בְּכָל-בָּשָׂר אֲשֶׁר עַל-הָאָרֶץ:
among all flesh which (is) upon the earth.

Exodus 31:16,

וְשָׁמְרוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-הַשַּׁבָּת
And Israel's children shall observe the day-of-rest,
לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-הַשַּׁבָּת לְדֹרֹתָם בְּרִית עוֹלָם:
to make the day-of-rest for their generations, a long-lasting covenant.

Leviticus 24:8,

בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת
On the day of rest, on the day of rest (i.e., regularly)
יַעֲרֹכֶנּוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה תָּמִיד
he shall arrange it [bread on a table in the tabernacle] before YHWH
continually—
מֵאֵת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִית עוֹלָם:
(it is) a long-lasting covenant (coming) from Israel's children.

2 Samuel 23:5,

כִּי-לֹא-כֵן בֵּיתִי
Because is not my house this way [or] because my house is not this way
עִם-אֱלֹהִים
with (the) Supreme God El? / .
כִּי בְרִית עוֹלָם שָׁם לִי
Because a long-lasting covenant he placed for me,
עָרוּכָה בְּכָל וּשְׁמֹרָה
set in order in the whole, and observed.
כִּי-כָל-יִשְׁעֵי וְכָל-חַפְּצֵי
Because all my deliverance / salvation and every desire—
כִּי-לֹא יִצְמִיחַ:
because did He not cause it to prosper? / because He did not cause it to prosper.

1 Chronicles 16:17,

וַיַּעֲמֵדָהּ לְיַעֲקֹב לְחֹק
And He caused to stand for Jacob for a statute,

לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִית עוֹלָם:
for Israel, a long-lasting covenant--

Psalms 105:10,

וַיַּעֲמֵדָהּ לְיַעֲקֹב לְחֹק
And he caused it to stand for Jacob, for a statute,
לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִית עוֹלָם:
for Israel, a covenant, a long-lasting one,

Isaiah 24:5,

וְהָאֲרֶץ חֲנֹפָה תַחַת יְשֻׁבֶיהָ
And the earth / land was polluted / defiled beneath its inhabitants--
כִּי־עָבְרוּ תוֹרַת
because they passed over teachings,

חָלְפוּ חֹק
they broke / frustrated a statute,
הִפְּרוּ בְרִית עוֹלָם:
they broke a covenant of long-lasting time.

Isaiah 55:3,

הִטּוּ אָזְנוֹכֶם
Incline your (plural) ear,
וּלְכוּ אֵלַי
and come to Me!

שְׁמְעוּ
Listen--

וַיְחַי נַפְשְׁכֶם
and your (plural) innermost-being will live!

וְאַכְרַתְהָ לָכֶם
And I will cut for you people

בְּרִית עוֹלָם
a long-lasting covenant--

חֶסֶד דָּוִד
steadfast loves of David,,

הַנְּאֻמָּנִים:
the true-faithful ones!

Jeremiah 32:40,

וְכָרַתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית עוֹלָם
And I will cut for them a long-lasting covenant

אֲשֶׁר לֹא־אָשׁוּב מֵאַחֲרֵיהֶם
which I will not turn back from following after them;

לְהִיטִיבֵי אוֹתָם

to do good to them,

וְאֶת־יִרְאַתִּי אֶתֵּן בְּלִבְכֶם

and I will place my fear / reverence in their heart,

לְבַלְתִּי סוּר מֵעָלַי:

so as not to turn away from Me!

Jeremiah 50:5,

צִיּוֹן יִשְׁאַלוּ דֶרֶךְ הַנָּה פְּנֵיהֶם

Zion—they shall ask (the) way there, their faces;

בָּאוּ וְנִלְוֵנוּ אֶל־יְהוָה

Come, and we will join (ourselves) to YHWH—

בְּרִית עוֹלָם לֹא תִשְׁכַּח:

a long-lasting covenant—it will not be forgotten!

Ezekiel 16:60,

וְזָכַרְתִּי אֹנִי

But / and I will remember, I (will)!—

אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתְּךָ בְּיָמַי נְעוּרַיִךְ

My covenant with you in (the) days of your youth,

וְהִקְמוֹתִי לְךָ בְּרִית עוֹלָם:

and I will cause to stand for you a long-lasting covenant!

Ezekiel 37:26,

וְכָרַתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית שְׁלוֹם

And I will cut / make for them a covenant of peace,

בְּרִית עוֹלָם יִהְיֶה אִתָּם

a long-lasting covenant will be with them.

וְנָתַתִּים וְהִרְבִּיתִי אוֹתָם

And I will give (it) to them, and I will multiply them.

וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־מִקְדָּשִׁי בְּתוֹכָם

And I will place My sanctuary in their midst

לְעוֹלָם:

to long-lasting-time!

