

**Sunday – September 3, 2017**

## **Preparation**

This upcoming week of Daily in the word will be spent entirely in the book of Ezekiel. Again, remembering our devotional from yesterday, God's desire as we go through this book is to "know that I am the LORD" (remember this phrase shows up 63 times in the book of Ezekiel alone). As Jeremiah wrote in Jeremiah 9:23-24, "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD." This being the case our Preparation for the week, and every week for that matter, should involve a "preparation" of our heart and mind to "understand and know" the Lord.

Furthermore, as we read through this book of Ezekiel, not only will we be given the opportunity to "know the Lord", but we'll also have opportunity to learn about our "adversary, the devil". As 1 Peter 5:8 tells us, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour". Of course, we are truly no match for the devil. In fact, Michael the archangel himself deferred his confrontation to the Lord as Jude, verse 9 tells us, "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." That being said, we understand that we alone are no match for the devil. However, it is of the utmost importance that we understand his tactics so that we do not become blind to his ways of diverting our mind from focusing on the Lord. This week's reading will allow us some insight into his very history and, therefore, provide some understanding into how he works. Again, be reminded that "Every word of God is pure" (Proverbs 30:5), and that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." (Romans 15:4) So, we as we learn of our "adversary", we can find hope in the fact that "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." (1 John 4:4)

Just as the prophetic books before, Ezekiel is full of principles and patterns applicable even on this day. As Paul wrote in Titus 2:13, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus

Christ” . Given the prophetic application of this book, our time in Ezekiel should, at the least, prepare us just a little bit more for that “glorious

appearing of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ” . Just as Isaiah and Jeremiah emphasized “that day” , Ezekiel continues the theme of preparing the world for the day when “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.” (Habakkuk 2:14) As we read, and therefore, grow to “understand and know”, may our lives be reflective today of the life which we will be living on that day!

**TODAY'S READING: EZEKIEL 17-20**

**OVERVIEW:**

The parable of the eagles (chapter seventeen); Man's responsibility for sin (chapter eighteen); God's lamentation for Israel's captivity (chapter nineteen); God refuses inquisition (chapter twenty).

**HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:**

God instructs Ezekiel to speak a parable to the house of Israel (17:1-10). The first eagle represents Nebuchadnezzar. He came to Jerusalem and took away the king's seed (the twigs) and planted them again in Babylon. The highest branch of the cedar represents king Jehoiachin, the king of Judah who was exiled in 597 B.C.

When Nebuchadnezzar removed Jehoiachin, he replaced him with a native Judean prince, Zedekiah, instead of a foregoing ruler. With the help of Nebuchadnezzar, Zedekiah was surrounded by favorable conditions and prospered in his reign. The hope of Nebuchadnezzar was that the kingdom of Judah would stay dependent on him.

However, this state of affairs did not continue. The second eagle represents Egypt, specifically Pharaoh-hophra, to whom Zedekiah looked for help. The prophet Jeremiah had warned Zedekiah not to make an alliance with Egypt (Jeremiah 37:5-7, 44:30), but Zedekiah ignored the counsel of Jeremiah and made an alliance with them (17:15). Although Egypt offered temporary relief from the oppression of Nebuchadnezzar, in the end Babylon defeated Egypt and put Zedekiah to death. If Zedekiah had only listened to the prophet Jeremiah he would have been safe. Oftentimes we find ourselves in trials and temptations. It is then imperative that we make haste to listen to the voice of God. God did not want Zedekiah to escape the adversity by making an alliance with Egypt. If Zedekiah had obeyed Jeremiah he would have been fine. People often want to escape adversity by refusing to submit to the authority that God allows in their life. Men will leave churches and quit jobs, wives will leave husbands, and children will rebel against parents, all the while justifying their actions by pointing out the ungodliness in the authority that God has allowed in their life.

Ezekiel 17:22-24 records a messianic prophecy. *"One of the highest branches"* refers to Christ, who unlike Zedekiah, will overshadow a mighty kingdom. It is interesting that God says, *"I the Lord have spoken and have done it,"* referring to

the future as history. God's Word is certain, whether He is talking about the past or the future.

Chapter eighteen begins with a proverb that serves as a warning to those who want to blame others for their problems. The children of Israel were blaming their forefathers (who they say had eaten the sour grapes) for the exile ("*teeth are set on edge*" = bitterness) they were experiencing. God rejects their blame shifting and evasion of responsibility. The rest of chapter eighteen teaches a fundamental principle found in Scripture. Judgment is according to individual faith and obedience. We each must take responsibility for our own actions and choices. It is true we can't always control our circumstances, but we can always control our choices. The Children of Israel had been offered mercy if they would have repented. Instead they committed the same sins as their forefathers. The chapter ends with God reminding Israel that His true heart's desire is always for repentance (18:32).

In chapter nineteen, Ezekiel records a lamentation for the princes of Israel. Lamentation means a "loud cry." It is poetic song (usually three beats followed by two beats) that expresses deep emotion. This lamentation is for king Jehoahaz, who languished in an Egyptian prison (II Kings 23:31-33) and king Jehoiakim, who was taken captive and deported to Babylon (II Kings 24:1-12). They are depicted as lion's whelps (19:2, 5). The lamentation ends with a summary of Israel's current state (19:10-14). Her exile is pictured as a plant in a dry and thirsty ground. The last verse states that Israel has no sceptre to rule. It is also interesting that Ezekiel's lamentation "*shall be for a lamentation*" (29:14). Israel still has a future lamentation, the great tribulation. However, with that tribulation will come a sceptre to rule! Christ!

Chapter twenty begins with the leadership of Israel coming to Ezekiel to enquire of the Lord. God instructs Ezekiel to tell the leadership that He will not be enquired of by them. He goes on to remind the leadership of Israel's past disobedience and current disobedience. The chapter ends with a vivid and descriptive picture of God's judgment with fire (20:45-49). The leaders of Israel reply by "spiritualizing" Ezekiel's message instead of taking it literally. They accuse Ezekiel of speaking in parables, when it is clear that this chapter is not a parable. This is the same thing that many lost people do when confronted with the reality of hell. They will believe anything except the fact that Hell is a *literal* place of God's judgment.

### **CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

As the "TENDER ONE" planted upon a high mountain – Ezek. 17:22.

**TODAY'S READING: EZEKIEL 21-23**

**OVERVIEW:**

Judgment pronounced against Jerusalem (chapter twenty-one); Jerusalem's sin (chapter twenty-two); Jerusalem's seduction (chapter twenty-three)

**HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:**

Chapter twenty-one contains instruction from God for Ezekiel to sigh in the midst of the people. When asked by the people the reason for his bitterness and groaning, he is instructed to again remind Israel that God's judgment is imminent. God uses the visual image of a sword to picture His judgment in this chapter. In the historical context the sword represents the king of Babylon (21:19). This sword foreshadows the day Christ will come in judgment upon this earth with a sword (the Word of God – Revelation 19:15).

Ezekiel is also instructed to make a map and to trace on it two routes for the king of Babylon to follow. One route goes to Jerusalem, while the other route will take him to Rabbath of the Ammonites. Ammon had conspired with Judah in 593 BC to rebel against Babylon. The question was whether the king of Babylon would decide to attack Rabbath or Jerusalem. Ezekiel is instructed to illustrate how the king of Babylon would call upon his gods to decide which path to take and which city to attack. To determine his course, the king of Babylon would use three types of magic. The first type of magic was the use of arrows. The arrows would be marked with a name, put in a quiver, and whirled about. The first one to fall out would reflect the decision of the god. The next form of magic was the use of "images" or teraphims (*see side note in center column of Bible*). These images were mummified children's heads. The third, and most common, form of magic was the liver. It involved distinguishing judgment based upon the color of a sacrificed lamb's liver. Upon hearing from his gods, the king of Babylon would choose to attack Jerusalem.

The Jews were skeptical of Ezekiel's continual prophecies against Judah and Jerusalem. They doubted that the magic of the king of Babylon would result in his choosing Jerusalem as a target, and further doubted his ability to take the city (21:23). Although the king of Babylon was using magic, his heart was in the hand of God (Proverbs 21:1). God would use the king's magic to bring judgment against His people. God instructs Israel to remove the diadem (worn by the priests) and the crown (worn by the kings). Neither of these offices would be

restored after the captivity. The historical “*wicked prince of Israel*” is Zedekiah (21:25-27). In this context, Zedekiah typifies the coming anti- Christ. The fact that God uses the term “*overturn*” three times expresses the severest judgment against these offices. These offices will be no more until Christ comes, who has a *right* to both offices. At that time God will give Him both offices.

Ezekiel chronicles Jerusalem’s sins in chapter twenty-two. Once again God begins by judging the leadership. He specifically mentions the prophets, priests and princes (22:25-28). The specific sin of the priests was their violation of the law by not distinguishing between that which was holy and that which was profane (22:26). The sin of the princes was their desire to make money at the expense of people (22:27). The sin of the prophets was lying about what God had said (Ezekiel 22:28).

God looked for a man among the leadership to stand in the gap. He found none. Even Ezekiel and Jeremiah were unable to turn the heart of the children of Israel to repentance. However, there was a man who would come 400 years later who would stand in the gap for all mankind!

Chapter twenty-three serves as one of the most vivid illustrations of the seduction of sin. This process can be summed up in three steps: 1) Desired 2) Delivered 3) Destroyed.

Israel was the Northern Kingdom and Jerusalem the Southern Kingdom. These cities were their capitals. Samaria (Northern Kingdom) and Jerusalem (Southern Kingdom) are likened to two women who are seduced into adultery by “lovers.” Samaria was seduced by Assyria (this historical alliance is recorded in Isaiah 7:1-2, 10:5-11) and Judah was seduced by Egypt. Israel was repeatedly warned in the Bible not to go to Egypt for help. However, Israel continually disobeyed God’s instruction. This culminated in Zedekiah’s formation of an alliance with Egypt against Babylon (17:15). The process goes as follows. We start by beginning to desire what we shouldn’t (23:5-7, James 1:14). Eventually, we will be delivered to our own lusts (23:9, James 1:15). After we have been delivered to what we have desired, our sin will destroy us (23:10, James 1:15). Both Samaria and Jerusalem got what they wanted, and it ended up destroying them both.

There are some other principles contained in this chapter.

- Lust for what we see will eventually lead to actions (23:14-16).
- What we see can destroy our mind (23:17).

□ Those who seduce us in the name of “love” will eventually hate us (23:22, 28).

What a warning against the consequences of viewing pornography. What a warning to those who covet wrong relationships!

### **CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

As the One who has the “right” to be both Priest and King ruling over Israel –  
Eze. 21:27

As the One who will stand in the gap – Eze. 22:30

**TODAY'S READING: EZEKIEL 24-27**

**OVERVIEW:**

God's purging of Jerusalem (chapter twenty-four); God's judgment against Gentile nations (chapter twenty-five); God's judgment against Tyre (chapter twenty-six through chapter twenty-seven).

**HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:**

Chapter Twenty-four contains an image of Jerusalem as a bloody city. This accusation is mentioned numerous times in the book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel is instructed to tell a parable about a bloody stew that represents Jerusalem. Numerous times in the Word of God the shedding of "innocent blood" is mentioned as a cause for God's vengeance (Deut. 19:10; I Sam. 19:5; I Kings 2:31). The shedding of blood in the Old Testament looked forward to THE innocent blood that would be shed one day at Calvary (Matthew 27:4). It is true that the innocent blood of our Lord Jesus Christ redeemed us from sin, but it is also true that those who do not accept God's gift of grace will be held accountable for the death of God's only beloved Son and will suffer the wrath of God's vengeance. God hates the shedding of innocent blood. How God must love us to have allowed His Son to shed His innocent blood!

Ezekiel is also instructed not to mourn when his wife dies (24:15-18). In this, Ezekiel is picturing the fact that there will be no time to mourn when God's judgment comes on Jerusalem. This foreshadows the coming Day of the Lord when judgment will be swift and extensive. However, even in judgment there is mercy. Ezekiel speaks specifically to certain Jews who will escape the judgment of Jerusalem and come to Babylon (24:25-27). This is fulfilled in Ezekiel 33:21. This foreshadows those who will be saved out of the tribulation.

Chapter twenty-five contains Ezekiel's prophecies against Gentile nations. These nations are judged because they rejoiced when Israel was chastened by God (25:3, 6, 8) and have taken vengeance on Israel when she was weak (25:12, 15). The doctrinal principle is clear. Don't rejoice when Israel is chastened! Much of this world rejoices when bad news about Israel is broadcast. There are many who look forward to the day Israel will suffer during the tribulation. Those nations who bring judgment against Israel are a pawn in the hand of God to execute His sovereign plan. However, after God has used them He will judge them! On a more devotional note, the lesson is clear. We should never rejoice when we see

God's chastening on others.

Chapters twenty-six and twenty-seven begin a three-chapter judgment against Tyre. The eleventh year in verse one refers to the eleventh year of Jehoiachin's reign. In 586 BC, the 11th year of Jehoiachin's captivity, on the tenth day of the month, Jerusalem was captured.

It is Nebuchadrezzar that God will use to bring judgment on Tyre. It is interesting that Nebuchadrezzar is called "*a king of kings*" (26:7), making him a type of the anti-Christ. Just as Nebuchadrezzar ruled the kings of the world, the coming anti-Christ will also stand in authority until the true King of kings arrives!

Tyre, an ancient city of the Phoenicians, appears for the first time in the Bible in the Old Testament in Joshua 19:29. In Old Testament times, Tyre was a great commercial city. During the reign of David and Solomon, Tyre exercised great influence on the commercial, political, and even religious life of Israel. Hiram, king of Tyre, was a devoted friend of David (II Samuel 5:11) who helped both David and Solomon in their building operations (I Kings 5:1-12; I Chron. 14:1; II Chron. 2:3, 11). Though Tyre and Israel were friendly in the days of David and Solomon, they later drifted apart. The Tyrians then later sold Jews as slaves to the Greeks and to the Edomites (Joel 3:4-8; Amos 1:9-10). This entire chapter is a lamentation describing Tyre as a very glorious and great trade ship destroyed by the high seas.

The prophecies set forth in chapters twenty-six through twenty-eight were fulfilled literally with unmistakable clarity (Isaiah 23; Jer. 47:4). Oftentimes we can forget that many of these prophecies have been fulfilled historically. This only confirms the accuracy of God's Word.

### **CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

As the One who shall "set glory in the land of the living" during the Millennium (Ezekiel 26:20).

**TODAY'S READING: EZEKIEL 28-32**

**OVERVIEW:**

God's judgment on the prince/king of Tyrus (chapter twenty-eight); God's judgment upon Pharaoh (chapter twenty-nine); God's judgment upon Egypt (chapter thirty); The fall of Assyria (chapter thirty-one); A lamentation for Pharaoh / Egypt (chapter thirty-two)

**HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:**

Chapter twenty-eight concludes God's judgment against Tyre. This passage has been dated shortly before the siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar (585-573 BC). The prince in view in verse two was Ithobal II who reigned during this siege. His arrogance is demonstrated by the fact that he considered himself a god (28:2). Princes of Tyre believed they were descendants of the gods. The precision of the imagery and the verbiage in this passage reveals this judgment not only speaks to the historical ruler of Tyre, but to another being as well.

Ezekiel mentions that this prince is wiser than Daniel, which indicates that Daniel was well-known throughout the world by this time. At the time that Ezekiel made this statement, Daniel would have served in Nebuchadnezzar's court for an estimated twenty-five years.

While Ezekiel states that this prince has been successful in accumulating wealth, it is the prince's pride that brings about God's judgment (28:6). The demise of the prince is prophesied in 28:10. The invasion of Tyre by Babylon was also prophesied in Jeremiah 27:1-7.

Verse eleven of chapter twenty-eight brings a transition. The word "*moreover*" emphasizes that Ezekiel is about to go further in his condemnation of the ruler. The careful reader will observe that the ruler is referred to as "*the king*" (28:12) rather than the prince (28:2). While it is true that the terms king and prince are often used interchangeably in Scripture, it is also true that secular history does not record a king of Tyre, only a prince. Why the distinction? Why did Ezekiel change terms?

The answer lies in the identity of this king. This king is said to be "*full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.*" While the case may be made that this description could refer to a mortal man in some sense, the next phrase cannot. This king has been in Eden the garden of God. Some scholars say that Ezekiel was referring to a

garden that was so beautiful it could be compared to Eden. However, this is not what the text says. This ruler has literally been in Eden. It is apparent that Ezekiel is no longer referring to the ruler of Tyre, but is speaking to the spirit behind that ruler. The pride that the ruler of Tyre possesses comes from a being that actually said at one time, *"I will be like the most high"* (Isa. 14:12-14; Eze. 28:16-17). Ezekiel is speaking to someone who had been in Eden over 3,000 years prior to this prophecy. This is none other than Satan himself.

It is not uncommon for the Word of God to speak to Satan through a man (Matt. 16:23). Here Ezekiel provides a description of Lucifer before his fall. He was covered in precious stones with musical instruments inside of him. He is called the "anointed" cherub. He was created perfect until the day iniquity was found in him (Isa. 14:12-24).

The ruler of Tyre pictures not only Lucifer, but the coming anti-Christ. Within this chapter we find this ruler described as:

1. A man—vs.2
2. A prophet—vs.3
3. A king—vs.2
4. A priest- vs.13 (as symbolized by the precious stones which we real so worn by priests in the OT)

This ruler represents the presence of Satan (who was once in Eden) personified through a man who will seek to counterfeit the offices of a prophet, priest, and king. The judgment upon this man is also revealed (28:17-19). God will one day bring fire from within this adversary (anti-Christ) to devour him. He will be reduced to ashes and scattered for the world to see, and *"never shalt thou be anymore."* A man who is the rightful prophet, priest, and king – who is the very presence of God – will defeat him! This chapter ends with a promise to Israel concerning the millennial reign of this man – Christ (28:25- 26).

Chapters twenty-nine through thirty-two record God's judgment against the nation of Egypt. Israel had turned to Egypt for help against Babylon contrary to God's instruction (Jer. 42:14-22, 43:7-11). Egypt had been successful in causing the Babylonians to lift the siege against Jerusalem (Jer. 37:5-7). However, in time, Egypt returned to their homeland and Jerusalem was eventually invaded and burned.

Now Egypt is falling under the condemnation of God. Once again God is using

Nebuchadnezzar to accomplish His will (29:17-20). From a historical perspective Nebuchadnezzar was running out of resources as he continued to wage war against Tyre (29:18). He ended up spoiling Egypt and paying his army to continue to fight. Verse 18 says he had no wages, nor his army. God's gift of the land of Egypt became their wages. Chapter Twenty-nine ends with a prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus Christ describing Him as the horn (Christ) of the house of Israel to bud forth.

In chapter thirty-one Satan is once again addressed through a man – Pharaoh (31:1-9). Satan is likened to a tree in Eden. The trees of Eden envied him (31:8-9), but he stood above the rest of the trees (31:5). During this same time period, Daniel, who is also in exile, uses the metaphor of a tree to describe Nebuchadnezzar, who is a type of the anti-Christ (Dan. 4:10).

Why does God use the Gentile leaders of these nations to picture the anti-Christ (Tyre, Babylon, Egypt)? The anti-Christ's kingdom will be a culmination of Gentile kingdoms that will unite in an effort to destroy Israel and to rule this world. We have to remember that God had promised that a man would be born that would eventually crush Satan's head (Gen. 3:15). God had revealed that this man would come from the nation of Israel. Throughout history, Satan has raised up, and will continue to raise up, Gentile nations to destroy Israel. The tribulation is Satan's last attempt to organize these nations in an effort to destroy Israel.

Speaking to Satan through these Gentile leaders, God continually reminds him that one day both he and his kingdom will be destroyed. Then, as a preview of what the future holds in store for them, God does what He says He will do and destroys each one of these Gentile nations. No doubt about it, God gets in Satan's face. The conflict is a personal one. This is about a war for a kingdom and God continues to remind Satan just how the story is going to end!

### **CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

As the HORN OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL – Eze. 29:21.

**TODAY'S READING: EZEKIEL 33-36**

**OVERVIEW:**

The responsibility of the watchman and the fall of Jerusalem (chapter thirty-three); Wicked shepherds and God's Shepherd (chapter thirty-four); Judgment against Edom (chapter thirty-five); Restoration of Israel (chapter thirty-six).

**HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:**

Chapter 33 begins with God's admonition to Ezekiel concerning his responsibility as a watchman for Israel. Once again, God emphasizes that it is not Ezekiel's responsibility to change the heart of the people. However, it is his responsibility to proclaim God's truth.

Because of Ezekiel's warning, the children of Israel considered their situation hopeless (33:10). However, within God's admonition we also find God's mercy. Oftentimes when reading the prophets of the Old Testament one might feel that God takes pleasure in inflicting judgment on His people. Nothing could be further from the truth. God reminds Ezekiel that He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but desires that the wicked would repent and live (33:11).

Our responsibility to our lost friends and neighbors is no different than Ezekiel's responsibility to his kinsman. We are to warn those who one day will be the recipients of God's wrath, to turn from their sin and to walk in the statutes of life and live (33:11-16). Who have you warned this week? With whom have you shared the story of God's mercy? We are the watchman. We are seated on the wall of a city, knowing full well God's judgment is imminent. Those asleep in the city might be our family, friends and neighbors. God forbid we would be silent.

This chapter also reveals the depth of man's pride. Rather than repent, the children of Israel were questioning God's fairness in judgment (33:17-20). Oftentimes that is man's response to reproof. Questions such as, "Would a loving God send people to hell?" and statements such as, "I'm no worse than anyone else" are nothing more than man's attempt to not take responsibility for his own sin. However, God says he will judge every man after his own ways (33:20).

For years Ezekiel had warned that Jerusalem would eventually fall to Babylon. One who had escaped notified Ezekiel that Jerusalem had fallen (33:21). Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 BC (II Chron. 36:19). Ezekiel further warns

those who were spared in the destruction of Jerusalem and scattered in the land that they are still in danger of God's judgment (33:27-28).

Ezekiel knows that Jerusalem has fallen before the messenger even arrives. Ezekiel 33:22 states that the hand of the LORD was upon him in the evening before the one who had escaped comes to him. Verse 23 says the word of the LORD comes to Ezekiel. Ezekiel 33:23-39:29 records God's word to Ezekiel the night before the messenger comes. Chapters 40-48 are dated more than twelve years after the destruction of Jerusalem.

The end of the chapter contains a short commentary on many of God's people in every generation. Even those in exile with Ezekiel were talking against him (33:30). How sad that one of the enemies greatest tactics is to deceive God's people into talking against God's leaders. They still came and sat before Ezekiel as you would expect God's people to do, and listened to Ezekiel as you would expect God's children to do, and even enjoyed Ezekiel's words as you would expect God's children to do, but they just wouldn't do what Ezekiel said! God says that when His judgment is come, His people will know that a prophet had been among them (33:31-33).

Chapter 34 contains Ezekiel's condemnation of Israel's leaders. Instead of protecting and providing for God's people, they had only served themselves. They had failed to care for God's people and to seek after God's people (34:2-6). Because of the failure of Israel's leadership, the children of Israel had been scattered (34:5-6). God says that He will personally seek out His lost sheep and save them (34:11-16). This is what Jesus spoke of in Matthew 9:36. There is still a future restoration for the children of Israel.

God then promises that He will set up "*one shepherd*," even my servant David (34:23-24). This is a reference to the Shepherd who would come from David's line, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 10:11). Doctrinally, the passage is speaking of Christ's millennial reign.

Chapter thirty-five contains a prophecy against Edom, which is called Seir (Genesis 32:3). Mount Seir covers the mountainous area settled by the Edomites. This prophecy has been literally fulfilled. Edom was defeated by Babylon, then by Medo-Persia, and then in 126 B.C. by John Hyrcanus the Hasmonean, who compelled them to become Jews. There is no trace of the Edomites now.

Chapter thirty-six speaks to the restoration of Israel. Even in the midst of their exile and judgment, God asks creation to remember His promise to Israel (36:1). Israel has been scattered, but they will be restored! God specifically says in Ezekiel 36:24 that He will gather the children of Israel out of all countries and bring them again into their own land. This was fulfilled in 1948 when the Jews returned to their homeland after World War II. Ezekiel 36:25-38 speaks to the restoration of Israel in the millennium. We are living in the “space” between verses 24 and 25! There has never been a nation in history that has been brought together again as Israel has. The restoration of Israel is one of the greatest proofs that the Bible is God’s Word. Prior to 1948, many scholars scoffed at those who believed that Israel would be physically gathered together again as stated in Ezekiel 36:24. However, after 1948 it isn’t hard to see at all. Blessed are those who don’t have to see to believe!

**CHRIST IS REVEALED:**

As the ONE SHEPHERD – Ezek. 34:23-24 (I Peter 5:4)

**Saturday – September 9, 2017**

## **Reflection**

In looking back over our week of reading, have we learned more of God? Have we grown to “know Him” more? There was definitely much to learn this week. Did we take advantage of such? As Paul prayed in Colossians 1:9-10, “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God” . Paul’s prayer for the church of Colosse was that they would increase “in the knowledge of God” . That being the case, our desire and prayer for each other should be no different.

If we learned nothing else this week, our Devotional Scripture from Monday, Day 247, revealed God’s desire for repentance from men, and because of His desire for all to repent and turn to Him, His longsuffering Spirit was also revealed. Again, 2 Peter 3:9 tells us, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” Therefore, because God was longsuffering with us, and “because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:” (1 Peter 2:21), we too are to exhibit the same longsuffering spirit in our lives. As Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 1:16, “Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.” Colossians 3:12 states “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering”. Paul also writes in 2 Timothy 4:2, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” The Biblical pattern is that as we “increase in the knowledge of God” , we then become more like him, because we acquire His traits. It’s really quite simple. God never desired us to know facts about Him for our own personal benefit, but rather that we would become more like Him, therefore crucifying ourselves and allowing Him to live through us. So, the application is simple. Are we walking as He walked? Are we speaking as He spoke? Are we longsuffering and merciful, just as He was? Perhaps we don't know God like we thought we did.

As we reflect on our week of reading, take some time to go back through our devotionals for this week, consider the attributes of God that were revealed throughout each day. Consider the lessons He has preserved “for our learning” (Romans 15:4). Furthermore, consider the responsibility that God has placed upon us by being “watchmen”, therefore warning the world of the judgment to come. Praise the Lord for the opportunity to “know the Lord”, and praise Him that “we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.” (1 Thessalonians 2:4)

### **SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:**

**Ezekiel 18:23** “Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?”

**Ezekiel 22:30** “And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.”

**Ezekiel 26:21** “I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord GOD.”

**Ezekiel 28:22** “And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Zidon; and I will be glorified in the midst of thee: and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her.”

**Ezekiel 33:7** “So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.”