

## **THE PROPHET EZEKIEL**

### **Sin, Judgement and the Covenant God - Chapters 4 to 19**

#### **A reminder of the Context – The Glory of the Sovereign LORD**

The nation of Judah had been conquered and annexed as part of the Babylonian Empire. A large number of God's people were taken captive and deported into Babylon, including the young Ezekiel. Ezekiel is living in the region of the Canal Chebur, with a group of other exiles and evidently some key leaders, whom Ezekiel calls the elders through his writing.

Ezekiel's first vision is a grand 'Theophany' a vision of the glory and sovereignty of the LORD. The exiles needed a new perspective of his awesome splendour and holiness, and a renewed calling to honour his name so that they would hold firm as a remnant of God's people.

Ezekiel also received his calling to be a "Prophet-Priest" with a watchman ministry. It was not to be an easy calling, and it begins with prophecies of judgement. These chapters are not easy reading!

#### **AN OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS 4 to 19** (Adapted from The NIV Study Bible @ Biblica.com)

- Prophetic Signs Portraying the Siege of Jerusalem (chs. 4-5)
  - Ezekiel's symbolic siege of Jerusalem (ch. 4)
  - God's razor of judgment at work (ch. 5)
- Oracles of Divine Judgment (chs. 6-7)
  - Doom for the mountains of Israel (ch. 6)
  - The end has come on the land (ch. 7)
- Abominations in the Temple and the Consequences (chs. 8-11)
  - Idolatry in the temple (ch. 8)
  - Judgment on the idolaters (ch. 9)
  - God's glory departs from the temple (ch. 10)
  - God's judgment on Jerusalem will come (11:1-14)
  - Exiles to be restored (11:15-25)
- Prophetic signs symbolising the Exile of Jerusalem (ch. 12)
  - An exile's baggage (12:1-16)
  - Anxious eating (12:17-20)
  - Judgment is close (12:21-28)
- Oracles concerning God's Judgment on Judah (13:1;24:14)
  - Condemnation of the false prophets (ch. 13)
  - Condemnation of the idolaters (14:1-11)
  - Nothing can turn back God's judgment (14:12-23)
  - Jerusalem likened to a piece of burnt vine (ch. 15)
  - Jerusalem allegorized as an adulterous wife (ch. 16)
  - Allegory of two eagles and a vine (ch. 17)
  - The soul who sins will die (ch. 18)
  - A lament over the fall of Jerusalem's kings (ch. 19)

## THE SHAPE OF THIS SESSION

Ch 4 – 5	Enacted Prophecies – Jerusalem besieged. (we shall focus on these)
Ch 6-7	Oracles of Judgement (these expand on the enacted prophecy – we will only consider their main points)
Ch 8-11	A Vision of the Temple – Abominations and wrath (we will focus in on this)
Ch 12-16	Oracles of Judgement (these expand on the Temple Vision and warnings)

### 1. EZEKIEL'S PROPHETIC STYLE & METHODS

Within the book of Ezekiel there are different forms and styles of prophecy which are used as ways of communicating the Word of God to the people. There are:

- Enacted Prophecies – Ezekiel enacts prophecies more than any other of the prophets
- Oracles of spoken warnings – Ezekiel backs up enacted prophecy with spoken ones.
- Visions that are seen and described – Ezekiel employs apocalyptic language.
- Oracles that explain the visions – Ezekiel backs up the visions with preaching.

These different methods have the effect of reinforcing the points made. It is like Ezekiel builds up a case against Judah and the consequences of their sin, methodically making clear to them the seriousness of the situation. To get the people to sit up and listen, to repent and change their hearts, to fully return to the LORD.

### 2. ENACTED PROPHECIES – Chapters 4 & 5

The year is 593 B.C. following on after Ezekiel's first vision and calling.

#### **STREET THEATRE 1 - Chapter 4**

##### **Scene 1. Making a Model City - Jerusalem under Siege (v1-2)**

Ezekiel is instructed to build a model city. He begins with a large block and on it writes the word Jerusalem, possibly with a map. He then begins to make the elements of a city which is under siege. As the people watch they recognise what it is because it is what happened to them 6 years or so earlier. Now they are being warned it will happen again.

##### **Scene 2. Set your face against Judah (v3 & 7)**

Ezekiel erects like an iron barrier and places it between him and the model city and sets his face towards it. It is like a prophetic stare. (see Num 24:1, 2 Kings 8:11). Ezekiel is playing the role of Yahweh, who is outside the city and has set his face against it.

##### **Scene 3. Lay on your side 390 Days – Bear the Punishment of Israel (v4-5)**

Ezekiel acts as a representative of the sin of the people. 390 days represents the time from approx. 931 B.C. when King Solomon turned away from the LORD (1 Kings 11:31-36) to the return of the exiles to Jerusalem in 539 B.C.

#### **Scene 4. Lay on your side 40 Days – Bear the punishment of the House of Judah (v6)**

Ezekiel was then told to turn over and lay on his right side for 40 days. This signifies the current period of history of the Babylonian exile, until the return to Jerusalem. The number is rounded down to symbolise the biblical number for a generation, a reminder of the wilderness generation? Interestingly the combined number of 390 + 40 which equals 430, is the length of time the Israelites were in Egypt before their deliverance (Ex 12:40).

#### **Scene 5. Siege Rations – Famine in the City (v9-15)**

The Lord prescribes Ezekiel a very meagre but balanced diet of special food (225 grams) and water (0.5 litres). This signified the famine which was to come.

And this food was to be baked in a very unique way – over human dung! A shocking and disgusting idea. Ezekiel is so shocked that he was told to defile himself in such a way, that he strongly appealed to the LORD, and the Lord relented (a sign of grace) and granted that he could use cow dung instead, a more common type of ancient fuel.

The famine was predicted in Deut 28:52-57 and indeed came about (2 Kings 25:1-3). The long siege meant they lost two harvests, therefore food and water was severely rationed. We read of the inhabitants of Jerusalem even resorting to the horror of cannibalism; Ez 5:10 & Jer 19:9.

And then suddenly after 430 days it stopped.

#### **There is HOPE in the numbers.**

God numbers the days. He is sovereign over time. The end is in sight and this will not last forever. But, judgement must still come!

#### **STREET THEATRE 2 - The Barbers Razor – The Sword of the Lord. Chapter 5**

*“And you, O son of man, take a sharp sword. Use it as a barber's razor and pass it over your head and your beard. Then take balances for weighing and divide the hair. 2 A third part you shall burn in the fire in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are completed. And a third part you shall take and strike with the sword all round the city. And a third part you shall scatter to the wind, and I will unsheathe the sword after them. 3 And you shall take from these a small number and bind them in the skirts of your robe. 4 And of these again you shall take some and cast them into the midst of the fire and burn them in the fire. From there a fire will come out into all the house of Israel. 5 “Thus says the Lord God: This is Jerusalem. Ezekiel 5:1-5a*

Shaving with a sword must have been very painful! It was also another shocking and shameful thing for Ezekiel the priest to do since total shaving was prohibited to priests. Again we can see something of the cost of Ezekiel's obedience in discipleship.

#### **Ezekiel plays the role of Israel (v1)**

This shaving symbolises Israel being humiliated amongst the nations, like being shaved of her priestly role. The hair is then used to symbolise her fate.

### The Scales of Judgement (v1)

Ezekiel gets the scales out of his kitchen and carefully measures out the hair into 3 bundles. This symbolises the scales of judgement that is to be justly apportioned.

### The Fate of Jerusalem (v2-17)

Ezekiel burns one bundle of hair in the midst of the people. Then he runs around chopping up another bundle with his sword. Then he hides some of the last third in his robe – and throws the rest into the wind. Finally he takes out some of the hair he hid in his robe and puts that on the fire. This signifies that

- One third will be lost to disease (the burning of fever).
- One third will be killed by the sword of the enemy.
- One third will be exiled, scattered to the wind. And even some of those will be lost.

## 3. THE SWORD OF THE LORD

What we cannot avoid here is that this is done by the ‘sword of the Lord’. The sword of his judgement. This image is often used in the scriptures (*Deut 32:39-41 & Lev 26:25;33*)

We often use titles of God found in the Scriptures to encourage us. Are you able to fill in the titles?

- Jehovah-Jirah \_\_\_\_\_ (Gen 22:14)
- Jehovah-Rapha \_\_\_\_\_ (Ex 15:26)
- Jehovah-Nissi \_\_\_\_\_ (Ex 17:15)

Here Ezekiel gives another title – but one we may not use so readily!

**‘Jehovah-Makkeh’** - The Lord Who Strikes. The Lord who strikes a blow with his sword.

Why is the sword of judgement being wielded? Ezekiel after his street theatre explains.

### A Terrible Indictment of Wickedness (v5-8)

***Ez 5:5-8 “Thus says the Lord God: This is Jerusalem. I have set her in the centre of the nations, with countries all around her. <sup>6</sup> And she has rebelled against my rules by doing wickedness more than the nations, and against my statutes more than the countries all around her; for they have rejected my rules and have not walked in my statutes. <sup>7</sup> Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you are more turbulent than the nations that are all around you, and have not walked in my statutes or obeyed my rules, and have not even acted according to the rules of the nations that are all around you, <sup>8</sup> therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, I, even I, am against you. And I will execute judgements in your midst in the sight of the nations.***

**They are worse than the nations around them (v6)**

This is a terrible indictment. They had always been a rebellious people. And amongst all of this we note a shocking statement.

**Behold, I, even I, am against you (v8)**

This is a refrain Ezekiel uses 14 times as he reinforces the message of the enacted prophecy. It is a saying which is the opposite of **Behold I am with you!**

## **ORACLES OF JUDGMENT – Chapters 5 to 7**

The enacted prophetic actions of Ezekiel have dramatically shown how Jerusalem will fall with great calamity. Many would be lost and many will be taken out of the Promised Land and taken into exile.

### **A CASE AGAINST THEM IS BUILT**

Now Ezekiel's tongue is loosened, and as he speaks God's word to them they are faced with hard words of truth as they are called to accept their own responsibility. So Ezekiel builds a case against them, verse by verse, chapter by chapter. There is no excuse. The list is long and damning!

#### **Their Disobedience – Chapter 5**

We have seen that they had: Rebelled against the Lord, rejected his laws and did not follow his decrees. They had done wickedness more than the nations around them.

#### **Their Idolatry – Chapter 6**

Ezekiel is now told to set his face and to prophecy against the mountains of Israel – probably the central mountain range from Galilee to Negev. When God gave them the Promised Land they found that the locals had built shrines and altars to their gods in these high places - and one of their first tasks was to destroy these and to centre their worship on Yahweh as the only true God.

Their sacrifices were to be centrally based around first of all the Tabernacle, then the Temple of Solomon once it had been built. However, many times the people fell back into setting up altars in the hills again and there sacrificing to the old gods, mainly Baal and Asherah. Or they worshipped them alongside Yahweh.

During the recent reign of King Josiah, these altars were torn down. But now, just in the next generation, they were back in use. This meant that they were again offering

#### **Worship to False God's**

They had taken on 'other lovers'. Rather than giving their all in worship to their Creator, they were worshipping created things. Taking their sacrifices to high places, looking for protection and provision from their idols. They openly display

### **Their Unfaithfulness**

And so we hear the hurt of the LORD.

***V9 How I have been broken over their whoring heart that has departed from me and over their eyes their eyes that go whoring after their idols.***

Yahweh's heart is broken for them, he longs for them to return to him. But also his passionate jealousy is aroused by what Ezekiel calls abominations to the Lord. The prophecies get stronger.

## **4. ABOMINATIONS TO THE LORD – Chapter 7**

Ezekiel makes clear that judgement will come, and it will come to all 4 corners of the land (V2). Again there is a regular refrain used to gain attention and to press home the point: ***'The end is coming' or 'Behold it has come'***. Ezekiel spells out a number of abominations.

### **Pride and Arrogance**

The sin of their pride had budded and blossomed v10.

They were blowing their own trumpet v14

They thought they were masters of their own power v24.

They had forgotten that unless the Lord fights for them they will be defeated (2 Chron 20:15)

### **Wealth**

They had come to believe that they were masters and owners of their own wealth – but in v19f we are told they will cast their wealth and ornate idols and images onto the streets.

### **Wickedness – Social sins and Injustices**

Violence has grown up into a rod of Wickedness v11. Jerusalem has become full of wrong doing, and this has resulted in

### **Crime and bloody violence.**

The land and people are full of violence and bloodshed v23. What is being painted here is a society that has moved so far from the Lord that they are worse than their neighbours and getting worse still. And all of this had consequences. Ezekiel concludes

***According to their way I will do to them, and according to their judgements I will judge them, v26***

The sins of God's people are being laid out in a clear manner. They are being called to account. Then we come to another vision where even more abominations are revealed, this time in the very heart of the holy city!

## **5. A VISION OF THE TEMPLE – THE TEMPLE DEFILED - Chapter 8**

The vision is dated at Sept 592 B.C. about 14 months after Ezekiel's first vision. Ezekiel is at home with the elders of the exiles who are visiting him. Suddenly another heavenly revelation is given to him.

We are told that Ezekiel is lifted up and taken by the Spirit to the temple. Verse 3 though makes it clear that this is a vision and not an actual bodily transportation to Jerusalem.

Ezekiel finds himself in the vision in a familiar place, the temple where he grew up. Then it was a time of great renewal but not now. Now it is in **spiritual anarchy**.

As Ezekiel looks he sees the glory of the LORD just like he had in his first vision. This is important to note. His glory was with them in Babylon (ch 1) and here also. But!

### **An Image that Provokes to Jealousy v5-6**

Then Ezekiel is told to look at the temple entrance and the Northern gate – that is the gate used by the king. There he sees what is called “an image that provokes to jealousy”. Scholars think this was probably an Asherah pole, an image of the Canaanite goddess, the so called Queen of Heaven (see 2 Kings 23:6).

At the very entrance of the place of worship was an idol that was to drive Yahweh away. He is a jealous God! His love is passionate and he will have no others before him.

### **In the Secret Place. Nothing is Hidden v7-9**

Ezekiel is told to dig into a section of the wall, where he finds an entrance which he enters to find a place full of idols and engraved images of unclean creatures. Ezekiel was shown below the surface where spiritual rot had deeply set into the Temple.

### **The Elders Worshipping Idols v10-13**

Here there were 70 elders of Israel at worship, led by Jaazaniah son of Shapan. He came from a distinguished family, whose father was in the cabinet of the government of King Josiah (2 Kings 22:3). One of his brothers was a supporter of Jeremiah (Jer 26:24), but Jaazaniah is far from a loyal follower of Yahweh!

The leaders of Israel are wholly given over to pantheistic idolatry. They are appealing to the spirits of many animals, and it seems trying to evoke the help of the Egyptian gods. Animals used in worship was most common in Egypt.

### **Weeping for Tammuz v14-15**

Ezekiel is taken to another part of the temple where a group of women are sitting weeping for Tammuz. Tammuz was the Babylonian god of plant-life, a pagan nature god, whose special rituals of mourning in worship were now embedded in the life of the temple.

### **Worshipping the Sun to the East v16**

Ezekiel is taken into the inner court where there are twenty five men with their backs to the temple facing east and worshipping the sun. This is happening as close to the Holy of Holies as you can get.

It is the place where the priests should come and weep in repentance of their sin. But now they have their backs to the LORD as they bow down facing the dawn of the sun.

As Christopher Wright graphically puts it *“lifting their back-sides to Yahweh. A more breath taking insult is hard to imagine”* (Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel*, p107)

### **The Abominations will incur the Just Wrath of God**

And the final words of the chapter once again serves as a summary.

### **Read Ch 8:17-18**

Spiritual anarchy had broken out in the temple, the House of the LORD. And it seems that they thought they can get away with it, that the LORD will turn a blind eye.

But, sin is not a trivial thing. Idolatry is not a light thing. None of these things are acceptable. They incur his righteous anger. His wrath cannot be placated so easily.

One of the most wonderful refrains in the Bible which occurs some 14 times in a wide cross section of the OT scriptures is:

***“The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness... (For example: Ex 34:6; Ps 103:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Neh 9:17)***

This is a wonderful promise. However, even though he is slow to anger, this does not mean that he will not show his wrath. Graciously he has been holding back this judgement upon Judah for generations. But now his wrath is coming. A sense of foreboding fills the air as in chapter 9 we meet the destroyer.

### **The repentant are marked – the unrepentant are judged - Chapter 9**

Warrior angels are summoned and a figure in white linen comes forth. He carries not a weapon but a writing case, and he goes through the city marking the foreheads of the people who sigh and groan over the abominations that are committed. (see also Ez 10:2; Dan 12:6-7; Rev 7:2-3; 9:4 for similar imagery)

These are those who do not consider sin and idolatry to be an indifferent thing. Those who are take responsibility for their sin and turn to the LORD. They are marked and will be saved. However, those who do not ‘sigh in shame and groan’ in repentance face the wrath of the LORD. There is no escape for them. The destroyer has been sent out.

### **A Second Vision of the Glory of God - Chapter 10**

Ezekiel then sees another vision like his first, with the cherubim and the wheels within wheels and the heavenly throne chariot of the LORD.

This time Ezekiel particularly reports a raging fire visible in its midst which appeared to him like the fire of the LORD, a symbol of refining his refining judgement. Then Ezekiel witnesses another extraordinary event.



## Read Ch 10:3-4

Here Ezekiel sees the glory of the LORD moving from the Holy of Holies into the courts of the temple. Ezekiel then describes the throne chariot of the Lord again. Then:

## Read Ch 10:18-19

The glory of the Lord has now moved to the entrance at the east gate. There is a movement outwards.

### 6. THE LORD DEPARTS THE TEMPLE – Chapter 11:22-23

And then at the end of Chapter 11 this movement of the Lord continues – we read:

***22 Then the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel was over them. 23 And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain that is on the east side of the city.***

Shockingly Yahweh, the God of Israel, departs the Temple. He removed himself from his own home, and he departs the holy city Jerusalem.

Jehovah Nissi, has taken his covering away. He has left the rebellious people to the consequences of their own actions and sin. What a terrible judgement.

#### **Treasuring God's Presence**

God's presence is the most treasured gift. It is at the heart of what he promises his people.

- He is amongst us. Ps 46:5
- He is near us. Ps 148:14
- He is with us to the end of the age. Matt 28:20
- He lives in us. John 14:17

Nevertheless aspects of his presence can be withdrawn, even from his own people, as the letters to the churches in Revelation chapter 2 & 3 show us.

### 7. EVEN MORE JUDGEMENTS - Chapter 12 to 16

The vision ends and Ezekiel tells the exiles all he had seen and heard. But they did not have eyes to see or ears to hear.

## Read Ch 12:1-2

They refuse to believe that Jerusalem could fall. They ignore Ezekiel's prophecies. So the result of this is even more oracles of judgement, and even more indictments are added to the sin of the people. So we see they are:

### **A Rebellious House - Chapter 12**

The refrain that runs through this chapter is that they are a 'Rebellious House'. They have disdain for the word Ezekiel brings to them saying "every vision comes to nothing" v22.

### **Divination, False Prophets and the Occult - Chapter 13**

Those who have 'lying divinations' v6

Those saying 'peace when there is no peace' v10

Those who use magic bands and the occult v18-20

### **Idolatrous Hearts - Chapter 14**

Another judgment against idolatry, this time to the elders in exile, to "Those who have taken their idols into their hearts" v3. Beware, this can so easily be us!

### **A Fruitless and Useless Vine - Chapter 15 (also see ch 17 & ch 19)**

The imagery of a vine is a common biblical metaphor. It describes how Israel was planted by the Lord and nurtured by him to spread through the land, to bear fruit and to be a blessing to the nations (e.g. Isaiah 5:1 & 4; Ezek 17:8). However, this was not to be the case.

As Isaiah put it:

***"Then he (the Lord) looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit" (Isaiah 5:2-4).***

And Jeremiah:

***"I had planted you like a choice vine of sound and reliable stock. How then did you turn against me into a wild vine? (Jer 2:21)***

Israel was planted to show God's glory in the world. She should have spread his love abroad blessing the nations – producing good fruit. But now she is good for nothing. Even the wood is not good enough to make anything of value with. The Vine is only good for the fire.

### **An Adulterous Bride - Chapter 16**

This is said to be one of the most unread chapters of the Bible. It hammers home that God's people have been and are faithless. We recall how the prophet Hosea brought a message to the Northern Kingdom of Israel about their unfaithfulness, Ezekiel brings severe condemnation to Judah as he likens them to a nymphomaniac bride, a whore and a prostitute. Very graphic language is used to describe this. For example read Ch 16:15-17

The chapter then goes on to build shock upon shock to make the point – and all this adds up to one thing.

### **A BROKEN COVENANT – BY THE PEOPLE OF GOD**

Take a moment to review the headings of these notes from page 5 onwards. They act like a catalogue of how Israel, both the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, had broken their covenant with God. It is a damning list. Divine justice will come. The Sword is drawn. BUT there is always hope, and even in these sections of Ezekiel there is good news:

## **8. THE PROMISE OF COVENANT RENEWAL – Chapter 11:16-22 & Ch 16:59-63**

Amidst all of the prophecies of judgement – and the hammering home of the consequences of sin we find some of the most wonderful, loving, tender words of grace and mercy.

Read Ch 11:16-22

Read Ch 16:59-62

### **THE COVENANT GOD - HE IS FAITHFUL**

Through Israel's history He has remained faithful. But as we have seen all too often through their history the people were unfaithful. However, because he is faithful he always tries to win them back, so his judgement always has the purpose to call them to himself.

#### **Judgement with Purpose**

Through all of the hard judgements there is an overriding statement that occurs.

**'that they shall know that I am the LORD'** (that, or very similar, appears some 27 times).

God's judgement is always to cleanse and purify and to win back his wayward people. This is the story of the generations from Abraham through Isaac to Jacob. From Egypt through the wilderness and to the Promised Land. From conquest, through civil war and a divided kingdom, and then into exile. Throughout, the LORD calls and woos his people back to himself.

And now, just when they thought there was no hope left, no chance to put things right. When they are wondering if they are abandoned, as Yahweh abandoned the Temple – he gives to those who are faithful to him a promise of a future in his covenant promises. It will only be his sovereign work, because only he can give new hearts.

## **9. DIVINE WRATH & DIVINE MERCY**

These chapters of Ezekiel are focussed in on God's holiness, and his inevitable anger and judgement upon sin. Can we though in the modern world use such language as God's wrath or anger? It is argued by some that there should only be a focus on God's mercy, and that we should only preach love. Some church movements like to play down the language of confession and repentance, therefore Ezekiel does not go down well with them!

Throughout the scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, as well as church history, judgement and grace, wrath and mercy are held together in tension. Both are needed.

The great preacher John Wesley was the master of this. He, in a society that was crumbling into social and moral ruin at the time - stepped outside the church and took what he called the "the true old Christianity" to the lost humanity of England. He began by preaching sin and death, law and judgement, and when he saw the people in conviction of sin he then began preaching the gospel of grace. Revival fire spread.

## THE CROSS OF CHRIST – WHERE WRATH AND MERCY MEET

In chapter 4:4-8 Ezekiel was told to lie down and to bear the sin of Israel and Judah. This evokes the imagery of atonement and the Day of Atonement (e.g. Ex 29:36; Lev ch 16).

Throughout Ezekiel's enacted prophecies the prophet's body became the prophecy, where he knew suffering and humiliation and shame. This evokes the Messianic images of Isaiah's suffering servant (e.g. Is ch 53), and then the Messiah Jesus (e.g. Jn 1:41; Phil 2:6-11)

We are drawn to the heart of the Gospel of Christ, who on the cross

- bore the shame of sin
- became the substitute for the punishment we deserve
- absorbed the wrath of God by taking our place

"My God my God why have you forsaken me?" being the cry when wrath and mercy met in the person of the Son of God

## WHAT OF OUR OWN HEARTS AND LIVES?

Let us ensure we listen to the voice of the Lord as he calls us to obedience and holiness - as well as to the freedom and fullness of the gospel.

Let us be deadly serious about the sin in our lives, and the need for confession and repentance, so our hearts may be cleansed, renewed and restored.

Let us be attentive to loving him with all of our heart and mind and soul and strength – and commit to live within his covenant promises.

What is God speaking to you about? Write down, or hold in your heart, where he is calling you to take responsibility in your life. To confess, acknowledge and repent.

We are faced with our own sin \_\_\_\_\_

We are faced with our own idolatry. \_\_\_\_\_

We are faced with our own indifference and apathy \_\_\_\_\_

Here is an ancient prayer to keep close to your heart:

## THE COLLECT OF PURITY

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires are known, and from whom no secrets are hidden; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

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## Readings for the next Lesson

Read Ezekiel chapters 20 to 37. Again they can be heavy going! If you cannot read it all then concentrate on chapters 20 to 24 and 33 to 37.