

## Ezekiel's Big Message from a Big God of Infinite Glory

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on September 19, 2010

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Ezekiel 1 (NASB) <sup>1</sup> Now it came about in the thirtieth year, on the fifth day of the fourth month, while I was by the river Chebar **among the exiles, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.** <sup>2</sup> (On the fifth of the month in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile, <sup>3</sup> the word of the LORD came expressly to **Ezekiel the priest, son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and there the hand of the LORD came upon him.)**

Context: Ezekiel is one of the exiled Jewish people in Babylon ("the land of the Chaldeans"). The date is around 597 B.C., so he lived the same time as Jeremiah who was still in the land of Judah at this time. Ezekiel is a Jewish *priest out from his land and temple*, who God's hand comes on and gives an out-of-body experience and an out-of-this-world vision of God and Ezekiel runs out-of-words to explain God's glory he sees (notice as I read as he reaches for words "like ... something like ... resembling ... appearance ... form ... looked like ... likeness")

<sup>4</sup> As I looked, behold, a storm wind was coming from the north, a great cloud with fire flashing forth continually and a bright light around it, and in its midst **something like** glowing metal in the midst of the fire. <sup>5</sup> Within it there were figures **resembling** four living beings. And this was their **appearance**: they had human **form**. <sup>6</sup> Each of them had four faces and four wings. <sup>7</sup> Their legs were straight and their feet were **like** a calf's hoof, and they gleamed **like** burnished bronze. <sup>8</sup> Under their wings on their four sides were human hands. As for the faces and wings of the four of them, <sup>9</sup> their wings touched one another; their faces did not turn when they moved, each went straight forward. <sup>10</sup> As for the **form** [or likeness] of their faces, each had the face of a man; all four had the face of a lion on the right and the face of a bull on the left, and all four had the face of an eagle. <sup>11</sup> Such were their faces. Their wings were spread out above; each had two touching another being, and two covering their bodies. <sup>12</sup> And each went straight forward; wherever the spirit was about to go, they would go, without turning as they went. <sup>13</sup> In the midst of the living beings there was **something that looked like** burning coals of fire, **like** torches darting back and forth among the living beings. The fire was bright, and lightning was flashing from the fire. <sup>14</sup> And the living beings ran to and fro **like** bolts of lightning. <sup>15</sup> Now as I looked at the living beings, behold, there was one wheel on the earth beside the living beings, for each of the four of them. <sup>16</sup> The appearance of the wheels and their workmanship was **like** sparkling beryl, and all four of them had the same **form** [likeness], their **appearance** and workmanship being **as if** one wheel were within another. <sup>17</sup> Whenever they moved, they moved in any of their four directions without turning as they moved. <sup>18</sup> As for their rims they were lofty and awesome, and the rims of all four of them were full of eyes round about. <sup>19</sup> Whenever the living beings moved, the wheels moved with them. And whenever the living beings rose from the earth, the wheels rose also. <sup>20</sup> Wherever the spirit was about to go, they would go in that direction. And the wheels rose close beside them; for the spirit of the living beings was in the wheels. <sup>21</sup> Whenever those went, these went; and whenever those stood still, these stood still. And whenever those rose from the earth, the wheels rose close beside them; for the spirit of the living beings was in the wheels. <sup>22</sup> Now over the heads of the living beings there was **something like** an expanse, **like** the awesome gleam of crystal, spread out over their heads. <sup>23</sup> Under the expanse their wings were stretched out straight, one toward the other; each one also had two wings covering its body on the one side and on the other. <sup>24</sup> I also heard the sound of their wings **like** the sound of abundant waters as they went, **like** the voice of the Almighty, a sound of tumult **like** the sound of an army camp; whenever they stood still, they dropped their wings. <sup>25</sup> And there came a voice from above the expanse that was over their heads; whenever they stood still, they dropped their wings. <sup>26</sup> Now above the expanse that was over their heads there was **something resembling** a throne, like lapis lazuli **in appearance**; and on that which **resembled** a throne, high up, was

a figure with the **appearance of a man**.<sup>27</sup> Then I noticed from the **appearance of His loins and upward something like glowing metal that looked like fire** all around within it, and from the **appearance of His loins and downward I saw something like fire**; and there was a radiance around Him.<sup>28</sup> **As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice...**

Mark Dever spoke in a 2002 Shepherd's Conference as a first time guest speaker, and he began his message to 3,000 pastors, most of whom did not know him, by reading this passage that many of us did not know very well, and most of us still don't know exactly what this chapter is about (myself included). I remember thinking as he was reading, is he reading from the right book? Did he mean to read Ephesians 1 but he's accidentally reading Ezekiel 1? What in the world is he going to say about this chapter at a conference like this? And why in the world would you pick this passage as your first guest appearance at a pastor's conference (which may be your last)? And what in the world is this chapter talking about?

But as he preached on Ezekiel, which is (let's be honest) a little weird, God Himself was transforming my view of God and of His Word in fresh ways that I hope God Himself will do this morning. I knew the words of 2 Tim. 3:16 "*All Scripture is inspired and is profitable ...*" but I could tell that Mark Dever *really believed that truth* and practiced what he preached and as he preached. It was a great lesson on our need to behold the God of the Old Testament who is not to be neatly fit into our little boxes, or our little brains!

I will never forget how he began his message. His first point will be our first point today:

### **1. GOD IS NOT LIKE US**

If you're hoping I can explain all of what we just read, you may be disappointed today, because I can't. If you have a good study Bible (ESVSB, NIVSB, MSB, Reformation Study Bible, etc.) you can study some of the details as to what some *think* all the imagery *may* represent. But I'm not sure that the greatest men can adequately explain the fullness of this scene, and I get the impression Ezekiel couldn't either, even though he actually saw the vision of it! At least he saw until v. 28 when he falls facedown and can't continue to look after a glimpse of the glory of a throne-like fire-like rainbow-like son-of-man-like manifestation of God *who is not like us*. This is not a picture easily visualized or drawn as a coloring page for children's church, or dramatized by Hollywood special effects, or trivialized in any way. This is a transcendent resplendent mesmerizing and traumatizing vision, like Isaiah's in Isa. 6 or John in Revelation 1.

This is one of a few rare occasions where God opens heaven and gives a vision of it and of Him (Paul's another but wasn't allowed to even speak of what he saw, and even if he could, we probably wouldn't understand much of it much better than this chapter). It's interesting that Isaiah had his vision *before* Israel was exiled and Ezekiel receives this vision *while he and they are in exile* and John also gets a similar vision *as an individual in exile* at a time when Israel had been driven again from the Promised Land and the temple again was destroyed, and God's people again scattered.

John was transported to draw his attention away from *the throne of Caesar*, then persecuting

God's people, to the throne above every throne of the One whose name is above every name and of the One whose glory is over all, through all, and in all (similar to Eze. 1). God later shows Ezekiel visions of a far bigger temple than Israel ever made and far greater blessings than Israel ever enjoyed, and most importantly, a far bigger God than they ever knew. There aren't words big enough or minds big enough, but Ezekiel does his best, grasping for the words, struggling to express the inexpressible and ineffable and infinite glory of the Creator to us finite creatures.

As a young man from Dever's church put it poetically lyrically: "I'm lacking the vernacular to adequately capture His glory! Incomparable, unconquerable ... unstoppable ... phenomenal ... it's impossible to exaggerate!"<sup>1</sup>

I don't know what music genre Ezekiel would like but I think he would like *the words* of this chorus: "Indescribable uncontainable ... All powerful untamable Awestruck we fall to our knees As we humbly proclaim You are amazing God ... none can fathom ..."

As Mr. Tummus said to Lucy Pevensie "He's not a tame lion, you know." The Lion, the Lord, is not a safe, small, superficial god to sing sappy songs to. He's no domesticated deity. God's not like us. And whenever and however God is spoken of *like us* and brought *down to our level*, be very wary of it. Everytime the real God of the Bible is seen, it's man who is brought down, way down, face-down.

So when in the bestselling fiction book *The Shack*, the Holy Spirit is portrayed as an Asian lady and God the Father is portrayed as "a big black woman with a questionable sense of humour" (Mack's own words), no matter how many enthusiastic reviewers / readers rave about the book and how it's helped them understand God and relate to God better, they're not learning more about the God of the Bible who in Exodus 20 did not want earthly images of Him made. God is Spirit, and it is cults who portray the Father in bodily form.

Beware of sentences that begin with "well I like to think of God as ..." what you like to think God is like is irrelevant if not irreverent.

In Psalm 50:21, God says "***You thought I was just like you. But I will rebuke you***"

Martin Luther once wrote in a letter to his Catholic humanist opponent Erasmus: "Your thoughts of God are too human." The same could be said of many in Israel years ago, and today's church

Dever writes: 'Ezekiel could *see* in this vision that *God is not like us*. He is strange, other, and different than we are. Often, we assume God is just like us. But Ezekiel's vision lets us *see* how God is an entirely different being that we are. We cannot simply make him over in our own image ... Ezekiel himself fell face-down, even after all his theological training! His new knowledge of God did not make him feel more casual about God at all. He was awed by this vision of God, as Job was awed when he had a vision of God. God is not simply the old man upstairs. He is no mere kind grandfather in the sky with a long white beard. He is not a friendly neighbor, a pal, or chum. The casual happiness we often regard as the height of spiritual intimacy with God is never pictured in the Bible. Every vision of God in the Bible is awesome and inspires reverence. [and takes His servant from trembling to trust. Dever says this vision

should make Ezekiel and Israel tremble and trust:]

**God is All-Powerful and All-Wise** [cf. the many eyes all around in this vision and faces looking every direction] ...

**God is not Limited by Circumstances**

‘But the real point for Ezekiel was that he was seeing God at all. After all, he was not in Jerusalem or in the temple. He was in exile when he had a vision of God Almighty! God is not limited to Jerusalem. The vision assured Ezekiel that God would be with his people wherever they were scattered. Indeed, God is not limited to any one place. He has a concern for the whole world, as the rainbow in 1:28, recalling God’s covenant with Noah for the whole world, reminds us [what some have called “covenant grace”].

Maybe [like exiled Israel]...you are troubled, uncertain, afraid you have lost the ability to be near Him because the circumstances have changed. Well, just as God showed Ezekiel and his OT people, he shows us that He is not limited by circumstances ... remember that God can work in many ways. He is not limited to particular circumstances. He is the God of the universe.’<sup>2</sup>

## 2. God’s Glory Cannot Exist with Sin

I’m not going to address all the questions that may interest you in this chapter or later chapters, ex: temple / end times / millennium, or who Gog is, or when Magog would or still will invade Israel and what nation(s) Magog was or is and how the timing of Eze 36-48 relates to the timing of Revelation 19-21, or whatever happened to the ark of the covenant at this time, or who the future David is that Ezekiel speaks of, or how the fall of Satan relates to ch. 28 and if it does, how and why did Satan rebel and where did evil come from?

The ancient rabbis wouldn’t even let men read or study Ezekiel in the Hebrew text till they were 30 years, lest they get confused and discouraged from understanding God’s Word. So don’t expect this Gentile young fella up here to understand it all either. But I want us to see the main and plain truths for God’s people Israel about God’s glory, Ezekiel’s big message of a big God of infinite glory.

Ezekiel didn’t see the full glory of God, as God told Moses no man can see it and live when Moses asked God to show him His glory. But in chapter 1 he sees a vision of what God *is like*. In fact, some form of the word “like” is used 23x in 11 verses, depending on which translation you have. Some parents may not like it when their kids use the word *like* all the time. But as Ezekiel sees a vision of the glory of God, his natural speech must use like / likeness / as if, etc.

What is God’s glory? It’s not simply or superficially defined in just one way, but the root of the word has the idea of weighty or heavy, the gravity of who God is, the weightiness of His importance, the worthiness of His character, the sum of all His attributes. It’s often the idea of honor or praise, for God’s sake, for God’s name/renown

In OT prophets God’s glory and Name appear interchangeably. Ezekiel 1:28 gives another example of how “glory” can be used:

*As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD*

In this case glory is manifested with the appearance of radiance, or some translations say “brightness” or “brightest light.” The glory of God is the visible radiating emanating communicating of God’s personal presence in a special way. In the wilderness it was esp. in a cloud, later called Shekinah. Later as Israel settled, God’s glory in this sense of the word settled in the temple in the holy of holies around the ark of covenant. Glory was associated with holiness: Isaiah 6:3 “*Holy, holy, holy, the whole earth is full of His glory.*”

And because God is holy, His glory cannot exist with sin.

In Ezekiel 8, a vision transports him to see what’s going down in Israel:

**8:4** *And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the appearance which I saw in the plain.* <sup>5</sup>*Then He said to me, “Son of man, raise your eyes now toward the north.” So I raised my eyes toward the north, and behold, to the north of the altar gate was this idol of jealousy at the entrance.* <sup>6</sup>*And He said to me, “Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations which the house of Israel are committing here, so that I would be far from My sanctuary? But yet you will see still greater abominations.”*

In v. 10, he sees further inside carved images of creatures and idols further within the temple and in v. 11 it’s the *leaders leading the way in idolatry*, apparently thinking “if our God can’t save us from Babylon, maybe we should try some other gods, too!” In the end of v. 12 they think they can get away with this because God’s not paying attention to them, He’s forsaken this land, they rationalize.

<sup>16</sup>*Then He brought me into the inner court of the LORD’S house. And behold, at the entrance to the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs to the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east; and they were prostrating themselves eastward toward the sun.*

... **9:1** *Then He cried out in my hearing with a loud voice saying, “Draw near, O executioners of the city, each with his destroying weapon in his hand.” ...* <sup>2</sup>*Then the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub on which it had been, to the threshold of the temple ...* [and God then orders Jerusalem to be destroyed]

**10:1** *Then I looked, and behold, in the expanse that was over the heads of the cherubim something like a sapphire stone, in appearance resembling a throne, appeared above them.* <sup>2</sup>*And He spoke to the man clothed in linen and said, “Enter between the whirling wheels under the cherubim and fill your hands with coals of fire from between the cherubim and scatter them over the city.” And he entered in my sight.* <sup>3</sup>*Now the cherubim were standing on the right side of the temple when the man entered, and the cloud filled the inner court.* <sup>4</sup>*Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub to the threshold of the temple, and the temple was filled with the cloud and the court was filled with the brightness of the glory of the LORD.* <sup>5</sup>*Moreover, the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard as far as the outer court, like the voice of God Almighty when He speaks ...* <sup>18</sup>*Then the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple* [God’s glory cannot exist with this sinful temple] ...

**11:22** *Then the cherubim lifted up their wings with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them.* <sup>23</sup>*The glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood over the mountain which is east of the city.*

God's glory cannot exist with sin. His holy name cannot be defiled and for His own sake He must act, and so He removes His glory from Israel and the temple as He brings judgment on both. There's a greater tragedy than God being taken out of our public schools and the public square ... it's God being taken out of our places of worship where He once was (temple or church – see Revelation 2-3). Our greatest need is not restoring God to America, but restoring God to our churches and homes. His glory must destroy whatever has replaced Him and must again become the center of our hearts and lives.

Israel's problem 2,600 years ago is our problem. It's a heart problem. You could study Ezekiel 14 later where their outward idolatry problem was not their ultimate problem; it was a symptom of their inward idolatry. God rebukes them for their "*idols of the heart*" (14:3-7) not just carved images. The problem is in our heart. What's Israel's hope and ours?

**11:19** *I will give them one heart [a new heart], and put a new spirit within them [i.e., new nature]. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,* <sup>20</sup>*that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God.*

### 3. God Will Be Glorified Despite Sin

This in context is a promise of Israel's salvation, but it's also a picture of how any are saved, Jew or Gentile (there's not 2 ways of salvation). A new creation / new nature is given (2 Cor. 5:17) to the formerly hard-hearted. Long before modern medicine could perform physical heart transplants, Ezekiel speaks of a spiritual heart transplant by our Great Physician and Savior! It's not man's doing; man is out cold on the operating table, not moving, not doing anything! God alone regenerates and replaces the stony heart and renews the sinner's nature and raises him up.

In Ezekiel 36:26 God says "*Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.*" <sup>27</sup> "*I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes ...*  
v. 25 *...I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.*

This is Ezekiel's expansion of Jeremiah's New Covenant language, and the heart of it is our new forgiven heart by the blood of Christ that washes away sin for all who trust Christ. Spiritual blessings promised to *the people Israel* here have analogy or application also to *a person* by the same Spirit and same cleansing waters of Christ.

Remember when Jesus talked to an individual named Nicodemus one night? Jesus used the words "water" and "Spirit" and "flesh" right out of this passage to describe how a person must be saved in John 3: *Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'* ...

Nicodemus said to Him, “How can these things be?”<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, “**Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?** [i.e., have you not read Eze. 36?]

Jesus in John 3 says you’re not going to heaven just because you’re born a Jew, you need to be *born again*.” It’s not about just being in the Jewish nation, you need individual *regeneration*. Were you asleep that day in Pharisee class when you studied Ezekiel 36? It’s only one of the most important promises to Israel in your Hebrew Bible and you “the teacher of Israel” don’t know that text? Brother Nic, if you understood Isaiah 53 then you’d understand John 3:16: *For God so loved the world [not just Israel] that He gave His only begotten Son [Messiah Jesus] that whosoever believes in Him [i.e., trust in Christ alone who was given for sinners on the cross] shall not perish but have eternal life <have you trusted in Him?>*

But most of Israel rejected the Lord in the NT gospel as well as in most of OT. So is God through with the Jews? Was God’s glory forever gone from Jerusalem? Is there no future? Does Israel get all the literal curses and judgments promised in OT till the end of time but any OT blessings promises to Israel are now just for those in Gentile churches? Jews get OT bad stuff, we get good stuff? Is the fact that Israelites are still around just a stroke of luck, as one put it, or just a coincidence with no biblical significance, as one British theologian put it? Is God through with the Jews as a nation?

Ezekiel 37:1 *The hand of the LORD was upon me, and He brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; and it was full of bones.*<sup>2</sup> *He caused me to pass among them round about, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley; and lo, they were very dry.*<sup>3</sup> *He said to me, “Son of man, **can these bones live?**” And I answered, “O Lord GOD, You know.”*<sup>4</sup> *Again He said to me, “Prophesy over these bones and say to them, ‘O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.’”*

<sup>5</sup> *“Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones, ‘Behold, I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life ...*

*...<sup>11</sup> Then He said to me, “Son of man, **these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.’**<sup>12</sup>*

*“Therefore prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel.*

<sup>13</sup> *“Then you will know that I am the LORD, when **I have** opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people. <sup>14</sup> “I will put My Spirit within you and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done it,” declares the LORD.’ ”*

*...<sup>21</sup> “Say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, **I will** take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and **I will** gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; <sup>22</sup> and **I will** make them one nation in the land ...*

*...<sup>25</sup> “They will live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons and their sons’ sons, **forever**; and David My servant will be their prince forever. <sup>26</sup> “**I will** make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And **I will** place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever <sup>27</sup> “My dwelling place also will be with them; and **I will** be their God, and they will be My people. <sup>28</sup> “And the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when My*

*sanctuary is in their midst forever.* ” ’ ” [notice “I will” – over 300x in book!]

Charles Spurgeon acknowledged that many in history have taken this text as *not about what God will do* with “the house of Israel.” Some say the bones represent just the general *resurrection* of human beings, or the *revival* of a dying local church, or the *Reformation* or Great Awakenings that came later, or the *re-energizing* of individual Christians from spiritual lethargy or lukewarmness, or even a man’s regeneration from lifelessness, etc. But he said man’s analogy and opinion can’t trump what God says in v. 11:

“[Ezekiel] was talking about *the people of Israel*, and prophesying concerning *them*... according to God’s own [word in v.11] ...I hold it to be treason to God’s Word to neglect its primary meaning ... The meaning of our text, as opened up by the context, is most evidently, if words mean anything, first, that there shall be ... restoration of the Jews to their own land and to their own nationality; and then, secondly, there is in the text, and in the context, a most plain declaration, that there shall be a spiritual restoration, a conversion in fact ... If there be meaning in words this must be the meaning of this chapter. I wish never to learn the art of tearing God’s meaning out of his own words. If there be anything clear and plain, the literal sense and meaning of this passage—a meaning not to be spirited or spiritualized away—must be evident that both the two and the ten tribes of Israel are to be restored to their own land ... [and far more important one day] the people of Israel are to be converted to God’s<sup>3</sup> [trusting the Messiah]

It’s not about Israel (or us) and what’s deserved, it’s what God is and deserves. I want us to end where Rom 11 ends after discussing God’s saving plan for Israel as well as Gentiles: “*For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To God be the glory.*”

#### 4. God’s People Are Saved for God’s Glory, for His Name Sake

Something far more important than Israel (and than us) is at stake. The reason God is gracious to His people then or now is not *based on* His people or *because of* His people. It’s for the sake of the glory of His great name, it’s not us. Israel is not the theme or point of redemptive history, and neither is the church. God’s glory is, the weightiness, worthiness, holiness of His name sake:

**36:22** “*Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. <sup>23</sup> “I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD,” declares the Lord GOD, “when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight. <sup>24</sup> “For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land ... <sup>28</sup> “You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God. <sup>29</sup> “Moreover, I will save you from all your uncleanness ... <sup>32</sup> “I am not doing this for your sake,” declares the Lord GOD, “let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel!”*”

Go back to chapter 20, where this is the key to God’s past, present, and future dealings. There’s nothing in the fallen hearts of God’s people that moves God’s heart to preserve us for just our sake. But there is something more important than us to God, His own name, and that’s the best news for us that He acts for His sake, His glory.

In Ezekiel 20:7 God says of Israel before they left Egypt: <sup>7</sup>“I said to them, ‘Cast away, each of you, the detestable things of his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.’” <sup>8</sup>“But they rebelled against Me and were not willing to listen to Me; they did not cast away the detestable things of their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I resolved to pour out My wrath on them, to accomplish My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. <sup>9</sup>“**But I acted for the sake of My name**, [i.e., that’s why He didn’t wipe them out back in Egypt] that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they lived, in whose sight I made Myself known to them by bringing them out of the land of Egypt. <sup>10</sup>“So I took them out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness ... <sup>13</sup>“But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness. They did not walk in My statutes and they rejected My ordinances, by which, if a man observes them, he will live; and My sabbaths they greatly profaned. Then I resolved to pour out My wrath on them in the wilderness, to annihilate them. <sup>14</sup>“**But I acted for the sake of My name, that it should not be profaned ...** <sup>21</sup>“But the children rebelled against Me; they did not walk in My statutes, nor were they careful to observe My ordinances, by which, if a man observes them, he will live; they profaned My sabbaths. So I resolved to pour out My wrath on them, to accomplish My anger against them in the wilderness. <sup>22</sup>“**I withdrew My hand and acted for the sake of My name ...** [and then he prophesies about Israel’s future restoration and salvation] <sup>44</sup>“Then you will know that I am the LORD when I have dealt with you **for My name’s sake, not according to your evil ways or according to your corrupt deeds, O house of Israel,**” ...

Let that turn your whole world upside down and your Bible right-side up! Then you can read God’s Word and the God-glorifying theme that ties all of redemptive history together and you can see it in through God-centered lenses, not through our natural self-centered vision. It’s not about us. But when God and His glory is in the center of our hearts and lives, it’s the best thing for us. And as God draws all the attention and glory to Himself, as He does in Ezekiel, it is for our good. And as we see God more as He really is, as Ezekiel did, may we fall on our face and may we be changed as he was. May we be humbled by God and then happy in God, as we fulfill our chief end / purpose: to glorify God and to enjoy God.

<sup>1</sup> <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justintaylor/2010/01/14/shai-linne-spread-his-fame/>

<sup>2</sup> Mark Dever, *The Message of the Old Testament*, p. 640-41.

<sup>3</sup> Spurgeon, “THE RESTORATION AND CONVERSION OF THE JEWS.” *MTP*, Vol. 10, No. 582. Also available online at: [http://futureisraelministries.org/files/The\\_Restoration\\_and\\_Conversion\\_of\\_the\\_Jews\\_582.pdf](http://futureisraelministries.org/files/The_Restoration_and_Conversion_of_the_Jews_582.pdf)