
THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

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The Prophet and His Times

Ezekiel son of Buzi was a Zadokite priest who was deported to Babylon along with eight thousand other exiles in the year 597 B.C.E., after the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by the neo-Babylonian monarch Nebuchadnezzar II (Ezek. 1:1–3; 2 Kings 24:8–17). This occurred during the brief reign of King Jehoiachin, who was also deported.

Ezekiel settled with his fellow exiles in Tel Abib (“Mound of the Flood”), a city located on the river Chebar (Ezek. 1:1, 3; 3:15)—a tributary canal of the Euphrates, southeast of Babylon (near Nippur).¹ **It was here that he received his call to prophecy on 31 July 593 B.C.E. (1:1–3), in the course of an awesome vision of the divine Glory enthroned in the heavens.** Thereupon, Ezekiel pronounced condemnations and dooms against the Judeans who remained in the homeland (particularly Jerusalem) until January 588 B.C.E., shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (see 24:1.) These prophecies are collected in Ezekiel 3–24.

During this period of Ezekiel’s career (593–588 B.C.E.), there was considerable anti-Babylonian agitation in Judah. This was concretely expressed by various attempts to form alliances in order to break up the Babylonian hegemony in the region. Something of the tensions, factionalism, and plots of revolt of this period are reflected in the Book of Jeremiah, where an alliance of states early in the reign of King Zedekiah (in 592 B.C.E.; probably encouraged by Pharaoh Psamettichus II of Egypt) tried to involve Judah in a general rebellion (Jeremiah 27–28).² The revolt was not successful, and Zedekiah was forced to reaffirm his

¹ Ron Zadok, “The Nippur Region During the Late Assyrian, Chaldean and Achæmaenid Periods, Chiefly According to Written Sources,” *IOS* 8 (1978): 266–332.

² Jer. 28:1 indicates the date of 592 B.C.E.; the dating of Jer. 27:1 to the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim is impossible, given the references to Zedekiah in vv. 3, 12. The dateline is missing in the Septuagint. For the issues, see William Holladay, *Jeremiah*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 2:112–116, with literature. For the rebellion, see Nahum M. Sarna, “The Abortive Insurrection in Zedekiah’s Day (Jer. 27–29),” *EI* 14 (1978): 89*–97*.



allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 29:3; 51:59). The winds of rebellion were still in the air, however, despite the apparent misgivings of the king (Jer. 21:1–7; 37:3–10, 17; 38:14–23). **In the end, Pharaoh Hophra prevailed upon Zedekiah to revolt, though the support of Egypt for the besieged Jerusalem turned out to be weak, brief, and unsuccessful. Nebuchadnezzar acted decisively. After a protracted siege and a raging famine, the defenses of Jerusalem collapsed and the majority of its population was either destroyed outright or sent into exile (586 B.C.E.).**³

Ezekiel received word of the fall of the city in 585 B.C.E. (Ezek. 33:21), and from this time on Ezekiel ceased to prophesy doom. **His oracles of spiritual consolation, national reunification, and cultic restoration are collected in Ezekiel 33–34, 36–39, and 40–48.** His vision of the restored Temple (Ezekiel 40–48) is dated to 573 B.C.E. (40:1). The latest dated oracle is from 26 April 571 B.C.E. (29:17).

Of Ezekiel's personal life, only a meager amount is known. The superscription to the book accords him a priestly lineage (Ezek. 1:3). **This background undoubtedly formed his extensive knowledge of priestly traditions, language, and ideology, not to mention his obsession with the Temple of Jerusalem** (its ritual pollution, chapters 8–11; and its purification and restoration, chapters 40–48). Ezekiel's overall restoration program also draws from ancient cultic traditions and practices, and his inaugural vision was richly inspired by ancient temple symbolism.⁴

In addition to a variety of visionary experiences (see also Ezekiel 10 and 40–42), Ezekiel is frequently portrayed in the throes of clairvoyant experiences of events in Jerusalem—even while he was physically present in Babylon (see 8:3; 11:24–25). These textual reports have produced many conflicting theories about the traditions preserved in Ezekiel's name. Some scholars have asserted their veracity for the period in question; some have regarded them as hyperbolic denunciations drawn from abuses prevalent during the reign of King Manasseh, a half-century earlier; while another group of interpreters presumes that these visions reflect events from subsequent centuries.

In addition, the often bizarre behavior of Ezekiel has also generated a library of psychological evaluations of varying suggestiveness. **He exhibited extreme emotional and physical reactions in connection with his dramatization of the fate of Israel and Judah:** keeping dumb for long

³ Abraham Malamat, "The Last Kings of Judah and the Fall of Jerusalem," *IEJ* 18 (1968): 137–56; and idem, "The Twilight of Judah: In the Egyptian-Babylonian Maelstrom," *Congress Volume, Edinburgh, 1974*, SVT 28 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), 123–45. See also K. Freedman and D. B. Redford, "The Dates in Ezekiel in Relation to Biblical, Babylonian, and Egyptian Sources," *JAOS* 90 (1970): 462–85.

⁴ All this is considered in detail in discussing the haftarot taken from Ezekiel 1 and 40–48; see the table of contents.



periods at a stretch (Ezek. 3:26; 33:21–22);⁵ lying immobile on his left and right sides, for 390 and 40 days, respectively, and also eating bread baked over dung (4:4–15); and remaining in an immobile stupor for a certain time after his wife’s death (24:15–17). **But all these actions and characteristics notwithstanding, Ezekiel clearly remained a significant personality within the community of exiles.** He received visitations on various matters by the elders of the people (8:1; 14:1; 20:1), among others (cf. 33:30–33), over the course of many years.

The Book and Its Message

THE BOOK

The Book of Ezekiel is the third of the three large collections of prophetic books in the received Hebrew Scriptures: Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

The talmudic assertion (B. Baba Batra 14b) that “the Book of Ezekiel begins with doom and ends with consolation” accurately reflects the arrangement of prophecies and (by and large) their historical sequence as well.

Thus, after the opening call and commission of Ezekiel to prophecy in 593 B.C.E. (Ezekiel 1–3), there follows an unabated series of oracles of doom and denunciation (in various styles) from before the destruction of 586 B.C.E. (Ezekiel 4–24). This section is followed by a block of oracles against foreign nations (Ezekiel 25–32), with chapters 26–32 containing prophecies specifically related to the siege period and a year thereafter (from winter 588 to spring 585 B.C.E.). **Chapter 33 marks a transition; for after news of the fall of Jerusalem reached the prophet in Babylon in 585 B.C.E., he underwent a renewal of his commission and began to utter only oracles of hope and restoration.** This material is found in various combinations in Ezekiel 34–37, 38–39, and 40–48. The later vision of Temple renewal takes us down to the year 573 B.C.E.

This bipartite structure of dooms and promises reflects a deliberate literary arrangement. The ancient Jewish historian Josephus even observed that Ezekiel wrote “two books” (*Antiquities* 10:79). But this comment is excessive; the structure is clearly integrated, with the first part the thematic prelude to the second. **We have already noted that Ezekiel’s initial call to prophecy and the divine adjuration to silence are picked up again in chapter 33, thus marking a transition from the first to the second phase of his prophecy.** (One may also note that the two units are not simply black and white; much depends on oracular circumstance. Accordingly, some promises occur in the first part [Ezek. 11:14–21; 16:60–62; 17:22–24], even as some judgments are found in the second [34:1–10; 36:16–32].)

⁵ See Robert Wilson, “An Interpretation of Ezekiel’s Dumbness,” *VT* 22 (1972): 91–104; and compare the proposal of Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, AB 22 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), 112–13, 120–21, contending that the dumbness refers to being “shut indoors and the ban on reproving.”



Also indicative of the highly organized nature of the book is the fact that the foregoing units contain stylistic or thematic clusters of material.

Thus in **Part 1 (Ezekiel 1–24)**, after **the opening vision, commission scene, and concluding vision (Ezekiel 1–3)**, the following groups of prophecies can be isolated: (1) symbolic acts and oracles (three each; Ezekiel 4–7); (2) visions of the abominations performed in the Temple of Jerusalem **and the climactic event of God’s abandonment of the city (Ezekiel 8–11)**; (3) assorted condemnations (Ezekiel 12–14); (4) allegories and teachings of judgment (allegory of the vine, chapter 15; of faithless Israel, chapter 16; of the two eagles, chapter 17; a teaching concerning individual responsibility, chapter 18; allegorical laments regarding the king, chapter 19); and (5) final teachings and oracles (Ezekiel 20–24).⁶

Part 2 (Ezekiel 25–32) contains a cluster of oracles against foreign nations (neighbors, Tyre, Sidon, and Egypt: 25:1–17; 26:1–28:19; 28:20–26; 29:1–32:32, respectively).

Part 3 (Ezekiel 33–48), after the renewal of Ezekiel’s mission (Ezekiel 33), contains assorted oracles of hope and consolation—particularly for the land and nation (Ezekiel 34–36), visions of national revivification and reunification (37:1–14; 37:15–28), and a near-apocalyptic war of purgation and purification of the land (Ezekiel 38–39); and a vision of the New Temple and its sacrifices, as well as the new land settlements for the restored nation (Ezekiel 40–48).⁷ **This final vision is marked by the return of God to the holy shrine of the Temple (43:1–12), thus providing a closure to the departure of God just prior to the devastation (10:1–11:25).**

Despite these manifest features of structure and thematic coherence, the Book of Ezekiel presents the reader with numerous difficulties. In particular, numerous repetitions (seemingly verbose and sometimes contradictory) and assorted verbal comments (often disruptive in context) make the book notoriously difficult to construe in many places.

As a result, an early trend of modern critical scholarship was to deny the authenticity of all, or virtually all, of the book and to seek to isolate the so-called *ipsissima verba* (authentic words) of the prophet from additions designed to explain or apply his words to later postexilic situations.⁸

Such methods were hardly salutary for an understanding of the composition and content of the

⁶ One may note a substructure within this larger complex, for chapters 14:1–21:4 are marked by alternating tree/vine imagery with reviews of biblical history; see Michael Fishbane, “Sin and Judgment in the Prophecies of Ezekiel,” in *Interpreting the Prophets*, ed. James L. Mayes and Paul J. Achtemeier (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 174–82.

⁷ For the structure and sequence, see Moshe Greenberg, “Ezekiel’s Program of Restoration,” in *ibid.*, 215–36.

⁸ Characteristic of this trend is the work of Gustav Hölscher, *Hesekiel, Das Dichter und das Buch*, BZAW 39 (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1924), who sought to isolate original poetic (or verbal) utterances from later additions; in the end only 144 poetic lines out of 1,235 were judged to be authentic. Charles C. Torrey, *Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930) proposed that the whole book was a literary fiction composed in the Seleucid period (third century B.C.E.)—and thus similar to the Book of Daniel.



book, and the best that could be said of these and similar approaches is that they motivated renewed attention to analysis of the difficulties.⁹ In due course, efforts were made to understand the nature of the compilation and the long process of redaction of the book from the exilic period on,¹⁰ taking into particular account the serious discrepancies between the Masoretic text and the Septuagint.¹¹

Gradually attention has turned to a more respectful approach to the origin and development of the text. One major breakthrough has been to attempt to determine the core of the prophet's words and then to follow as carefully as possible the ongoing reinterpretations and developments of the materials by circles of disciples and latter-day heirs.¹² This exegetical and analytical quest has been aided, but also considerably frustrated, by the often contradictory literary traditions found in the ancient Greek translations. Hence, there is no simple or foolproof method for determining the original components of the prophecies. As a result, some scholars have chosen not to engage in hypothetical reconstructions or blendings of various textual traditions and have rather chosen to discuss only one tradition or the other.¹³ **The result has been a new emphasis on stylistic and structural features of the various units and even the assertion that Ezekiel himself was his own first editor and that the composition gives many indications of serious editorial care—the well-known difficulties notwithstanding.**¹⁴

A second group of difficulties facing the reader of Ezekiel's prophecies pertains to the very nature of his language. Some of his grammatical forms and terms already puzzled the oldest Jewish Bible translators and account for their often forced and speculative renditions. His language was also a great stumbling block for medieval and Renaissance Jewish commentators. The comment of Don Isaac Abravanel in the sixteenth century is an accurate, if ungenerous, assessment of the case. "Ezekiel," he said, "was not versed in the Hebrew language or its

⁹ For a review of this period of scholarship, see Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1929), 1:3–9.

¹⁰ See, for example, Carl G. Howie, *The Date and Composition of Ezekiel*, SBLMS 4 (Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1950); and the work of Georg Fohrer, in "Die Glossen im Buche Ezechiel," *ZAW* 63 (1951): 33–53, and *Die Hauptprobleme des Buches Ezechiel*, BZAW 72 (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1952).

¹¹ The relationship between the Masoretic text and the Septuagint poses special problems. For a comparison of the materials, see G. A. Cooke, *Ezekiel*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936), xl–xlvii. For an analysis of the use of the Greek text for understanding Ezekiel, see Moshe Greenberg, "The Use of the Ancient Versions for Understanding the Hebrew Text: A Sampling from Ezek II, 1–III, 11," *Congress Volume, Goettingen 1977*, SVT 29 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), 131–48.

¹² This approach has been developed with much force by W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* (two volumes). His work is marked by many attempts to determine authentic speech forms and formulae. Instructive research may be found in his "Die Eigenart der prophetischen Rede des Ezechiel. Ein Beitrag zum Problem an Hand von Ez 14, 1–11," *ZAW* 66 (1954): 1–26; and "The Special Form- and Tradition-Historical Character of Ezekiel's Prophecies," *VT* 15 (1965): 515–27.

¹³ Thus, Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, AB 22 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), 21–24.

¹⁴ See in idem, *ibid.*, and *Ezekiel 21–37*, AB 22A (New York: Doubleday, 1997).



spelling.... Hence strange words occur, as well as missing or superfluous letters.”¹⁵ Today, increased knowledge of Aramaic grammar and syntax, especially their impact upon the Hebrew of Ezekiel’s time, and increased knowledge of the Akkadian language, especially the neo-Babylonian dialect of Ezekiel’s exilic milieu, have helped to solve many puzzles. **Indeed, new respect for the accuracy of Ezekiel’s language has promoted a more respectful and cautious regard for the difficulties that remain. Nevertheless, by any comparative standard, Ezekiel’s prose style remains highly idiosyncratic—with often jarring shifts of grammatical person and point of view.** The inaugural vision in chapter 1 and the account of the new sacrificial and cultic service in chapters 43–48 provide many examples of this phenomenon.

A final feature of Ezekiel’s prophecies has long caused consternation. **This concerns the many priestly and legal traditions in the Book of Ezekiel that manifestly contradict those known from the Torah. For the ancient Rabbis in particular, the priestly rules found in Ezekiel 43–48 caused considerable vexation when compared to the content of the Sinaitic revelation.** According to a talmudic tradition, this matter nearly led to the withdrawal of the Book of Ezekiel from public use—were it not for a heroic feat of exegetical harmonization by one Hananiah ben Hezekiah (B. Shabbat 13b); unaccountably, barely a trace of his reconciliations have been transmitted (see Sifre on Deuteronomy, piska 294, end).¹⁶ The Rabbis were also concerned about the vision reported in chapter 1, whose content was considered a profound esoteric matter reserved for the select few (see M. Hagigah 2:1; B. Hagigah 13a). An anonymous opinion in the Mishnah (M. Megillah 4:10) argued against reciting this chapter as a haftarah. But this view did not become normative halakhah, and Ezekiel 1 is recited on the first day of Shavuot (cf. B. Megillah 31b). **Strictures were also leveled against Ezekiel 16, because of its often bawdy tone and its insult to Jerusalem.** But there were other opinions to the contrary (see B. Megillah 25a–b).

For moderns, however, all these matters have been a boon. **For one thing, these textual elements preserve valuable witnesses to the variety of legal-cultic traditions that existed in Ezekiel’s day and that contributed to the literary and theological vitality of early postexilic Judaism.** In addition, the visionary depiction of the throne of Glory provides precious testimony

¹⁵ See in the standard editions, First Introduction to the Book of Ezekiel, end.

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¹⁶ See in the edition of Louis Finkelstein (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1969), 313. For a full discussion of the contradictions and proposed solutions, see my discussion on the haftarot for Tetzavveh and Parashat Ha-Ḥodesh (Ezek. 43:10–27 and 45:16–46:18 [Ashkenazim]; 45:18–46:15 [Sephardim], respectively).

M. Mishnah

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of traditions of iconography, while the ribald tone of some of Ezekiel's discourses expands our appreciation of the pungency and earthiness of prophetic diatribes. Collectively, these passages permit a richer sense of the habits of literary expression and normative action in ancient Israel than would otherwise be known. A representative sample of the rich and brash prophetic oratory of the prophet Ezekiel, together with the striking range of legal and historical traditions that he articulates, is preserved in the haftarot taken from his prophecies.

THE MESSAGE

The hallmark of the oracles in the first part of the Book of Ezekiel, chapters 4–24, is the prophet's repeated insistence upon the inevitability of the doom and exile to befall the citizens of Jerusalem because of their sins.¹⁷ Indeed, the contrast between the divine visions of chapters 1 and 10 and the divinely guided visions of the sins performed in Jerusalem (chapter 8) is noteworthy in this regard. It highlights **Ezekiel's experience of the transcendent majesty and holiness of God, over against his vision of Israel's debased practices**—these being a betrayal of the covenant in its moral and ritual aspects (the two are frequently linked; cf. Ezekiel 6–7 and 22).

The inevitability of doom is, in fact, a recurrent theme in the prophecies of Ezekiel (Ezek. 12:21–28; 14:12–20; 21:1–7); intercessions of mercy are utterly rejected (9:10). It is furthermore striking that, in contrast with his contemporary fellow prophet Jeremiah, Ezekiel offers no direct call for repentance throughout chapters 4–24. One is therefore left with the sense that the time for hope is past and that the prophecies of doom are geared to impress upon the people of Jerusalem the realization that **their punishment is directly due to their rejection of the covenant (cf. 6:1–14; 16:36).** Not only the shorter oracles, but also the larger allegorical retrospectives of Israel's faithless past as a covenantal bride of God (chapters 16 and 23) confirm this sense of an imminent fate. The nation, having rejected God in the past, must therefore bear the consequences of their behavior; indeed, having disregarded God's covenant, **the people will come to acknowledge their God *in and through the dooms that will befall them.***

Just this conclusion, one may suggest, is the key reason why many of Ezekiel's oracles of doom conclude with the phrase "that you [Israel] shall know that I am the LORD."¹⁸ *The educational function of the punishments* is thus designed to confront the people in Judah and Babylon with the inexorable consequences of their covenantal disobedience and thereby promote repentance after the exile (cf. Ezek. 6:9–10, 13; 12:6; 14:11, 22–23). By the same token, the survivors of the destruction of Jerusalem will also serve an educational function for the exiles, since through their profane behavior they will publicly vindicate the justice of God's punishment

¹⁷ On this doom cycle overall, see my remarks in "Sin and Judgment in the Prophecies of Ezekiel," 170–87.

¹⁸ According to W. Zimmerli, this formula functions as a kind of proof-saying; see in *Ezekiel* (two volumes), passim.



(cf. 14:22–23).

Ezekiel’s earliest oracles are thus utterly bleak and hopeless, the dark and fateful content of the scroll of “lamentations, dirges, and woes” that he internalized in the course of his prophetic inauguration (Ezek. 2:8–10). Even the apparent contradiction to this feature, in which Ezekiel is instructed to act as a “warner” to the people in Jerusalem (3:17–21)—to tell them that each person’s return-to-righteousness or backsliding-to-evil fixes that individual’s fate for “life” or “death”—does not obliterate **the pall of the opening collection of doom oracles.** For one thing, Ezekiel never acts on this task in chapters 4–24. This suggests that this dimension of his prophetic vocation is a later prophetic teaching—a response to the implication that the fate of the people to whom Ezekiel addressed himself in the opening years of his ministry was utterly without hope. And even granting that the doom oracles are the warnings referred to, the hope in chapters 4–24 is at best a matter addressed to each individual (see 14:12–23). Moreover, the oracles in chapters 4–24 that are specifically addressed to the exiles also convey the same bleak (or only partially hopeful) sense. **The report of the abominations performed in Jerusalem, which Ezekiel brought to the exiles, together with the announcement of that city’s fate (see chapters 8–11), presumably serves to justify to the exiles the inevitability of the doom to come—and therewith dashes any lingering hopes of an end to the exile before the destruction of Jerusalem.**¹⁹ Similarly, 12:1–16 plausibly condemns those exiles who ignore the doom pronouncements against Jerusalem and hope against hope that this disaster will *not* occur.²⁰ To underscore this point, 12:17–20 re-announces the doom of Jerusalem, and 12:21–28 rebuts popular claims that Ezekiel’s doom oracles would not come to pass.

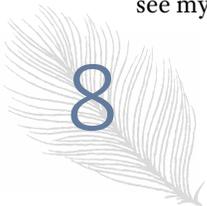
This complex relationship between individual hopes and national doom recurs elsewhere in Ezekiel’s oracles and sets two of his most stunning discourses in apparent contradiction. **Thus, on the one hand, Ezekiel 20 reviews Israelite history as a story of continual apostasy: in Egypt (vv. 5–10), in the wilderness (vv. 11–26), in the homeland, and in exile (vv. 30–44).** In the first and second cases (after the worship of the Golden Calf), God forgave the people for His Name’s sake. Similarly, the second generation of the wilderness was reprieved after apostasy—although, nevertheless, they were now given “bad” laws, so that they and their descendants would sin and be ultimately doomed to exile. **The exile is thus presented here as an inevitable corporate punishment—one whose fulfillment is predetermined, despite instances of individual righteousness.** Indeed, on the basis of this theology, sons would indeed inherit the sins of their fathers—as the people quite explicitly say in Ezek. 18:2, **though the entire rhetoric and purpose of chapter 18 are to rebut this idea and to emphasize the individual’s power to repent of sin:** not just sins between generations, *but even* sins committed within the course of any individual lifetime.²¹

Conceivably, in an effort to reconcile the foregoing contradiction, one may propose that the

¹⁹ See my remarks in “Sin and Judgment in the Prophecies of Ezekiel,” 184–85.

²⁰ See Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 209.

²¹ For the complicated theological issues in Ezekiel 18 and the people’s response to the prophet’s words, see my discussion in *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 337–40.



corporate or collective doom depicted in Ezekiel 20 was believed by the prophet to be punishment for cultic sins—and also a thing of the past. **If so, the purpose of Ezekiel 18 would then be to emphasize the point that individual responsibility and repentance are the people’s best hope for a national renewal *after* the destruction. However, the fact is that the discourse in Ezekiel 20 disregards this theology of exilic hope.** Indeed, at the end of His harangue about continual national apostasy (that continued into the exile itself), God announces a unilateral redemption of all the exilic sinners. This act of divine grace is described as a totally undeserved redemption—a new Exodus, so to speak, performed (like the first one, says the prophet) by God in a blaze of divine “fury.”

From these two texts (Ezekiel 18 and 20), one senses the powerful mood swings and theological variations in Ezekiel’s prophecies. The oracles of hope in chapters 33–37 reflect still other abrupt transformations, this time around the themes of national reunification and restoration under a scion of David. **In connection with these oracles, it is likely that the prophet’s despair over the very possibility of Israel’s repentance from sin elicits prophecies of other unilateral divine acts—undeserved acts of grace that transform the wayward heart of the people (36:24–28), that revive the anguished nation and restore her to Zion (37:9–14), and that transform the rubble of Jerusalem into a Garden of Eden (36:35–36). To cap these miraculous developments, the blueprint of a new Temple is also revealed, and a new order of cultic holiness is anticipated. At this time, the divine Glory will return to the Temple and dwell amidst the cherubim (43:1–4).** The desperate anticipation of a permanent transformation of the national and spiritual situation is poignantly underscored by the repetition of the phrase *lo’ ‘od*, “never again.” It is at once a concise and vigorous expression of divine assurance—invoked by Ezekiel as God’s word to the nation in exile (34:28, 29; 36:30; 43:7) and offering hope against despair that the terror of the past shall cease forever.¹

¹ Michael A. Fishbane, *Haftarot*, The JPS Bible Commentary (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2002), 546–552.

