THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

Chapter 21

The End of the Monarchy

Chapter 21 - Introduction

- 20:46-49 are at the beginning of Chapter 21 in the Hebrew Bible.
- *"Chapter 21 is one of the most important chapters in the Book of Ezekiel as it makes it very explicit that the King of Babylon is going to remove the last king of the Davidic line until Messiah comes".*

– Chuck Missler

The End of the Dynasty

- There was no lawful king left. The royal line was cursed Jer 22:30
- Following the exile, no one was willing or able to take up the mantle
  - That leaves only One who can be heir to the Throne of David.
  - It has to be One from the royal line of David ‘legally’, but not from that blood line.
  - The only rightful King left is the Messiah Himself!
  - He was a descendant of the royal line through Joseph, but not of his blood!
  - He will sit on David’s throne as the Gabriel promised Mary. Luke 1:32

Acts 15:13-18; q.v. Amos 9:11,12

The Prophecy of the Sword

- Often referred to as "The Song of the Sword“, Chapter 21 marks a shift from the parables of Ch15-17 to a very literal, frightening warning:
- The judgment of Jerusalem is no longer a distant threat; it is imminent.
- The sword in view here is Nebuchadnezzar.
  - In 588 B.C. he had a campaign to quell the revolts of Tyre, Judah, and Ammon, the three principalities that were revolting against him.
  - He launched a siege which ended in 587 B.C. with the destruction of Jerusalem.

45 Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,
46 Son of man, set thy face toward the south, and drop thy word toward the south, and prophesy against the forest of the south field;

Ezekiel 20:45-46

- Ezekiel uses three different Hebrew words for 'South' in this verse (Teman, Darom, and Negeb)
- This wordplay was to underline that no part of the southern territory is exempt and highlights the absolute precision of the impending judgment.

Judgment against the South

- The "Face" and the "Word": God tells Ezekiel to physically "set his face" toward Jerusalem.
- The “Negeb” today is considered desert and arid today, but in Ezekiel's time, the southern hill country had significantly more Mediterranean forestation.
- The "Forest of the South": This is a poetic but literal reference to the Kingdom of Judah.
  - The Trees: In biblical prophecy, trees often represent people (specifically leaders or "mighty men"). A forest represents a dense population or a structured society.
- This was a legal and prophetic sign—Ezekiel was acting as a human "signpost," pointing the finger at the coming judgement.

47 And say to the forest of the south, Hear the
word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord God;
Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall
devour every green tree in thee, and every dry
tree: the flaming flame shall not be quenched,
and all faces from the south to the north shall be
burned therein.

48 And all flesh shall see that I the Lord have
kindled it: it shall not be quenched.

Ezekiel 20:47-48

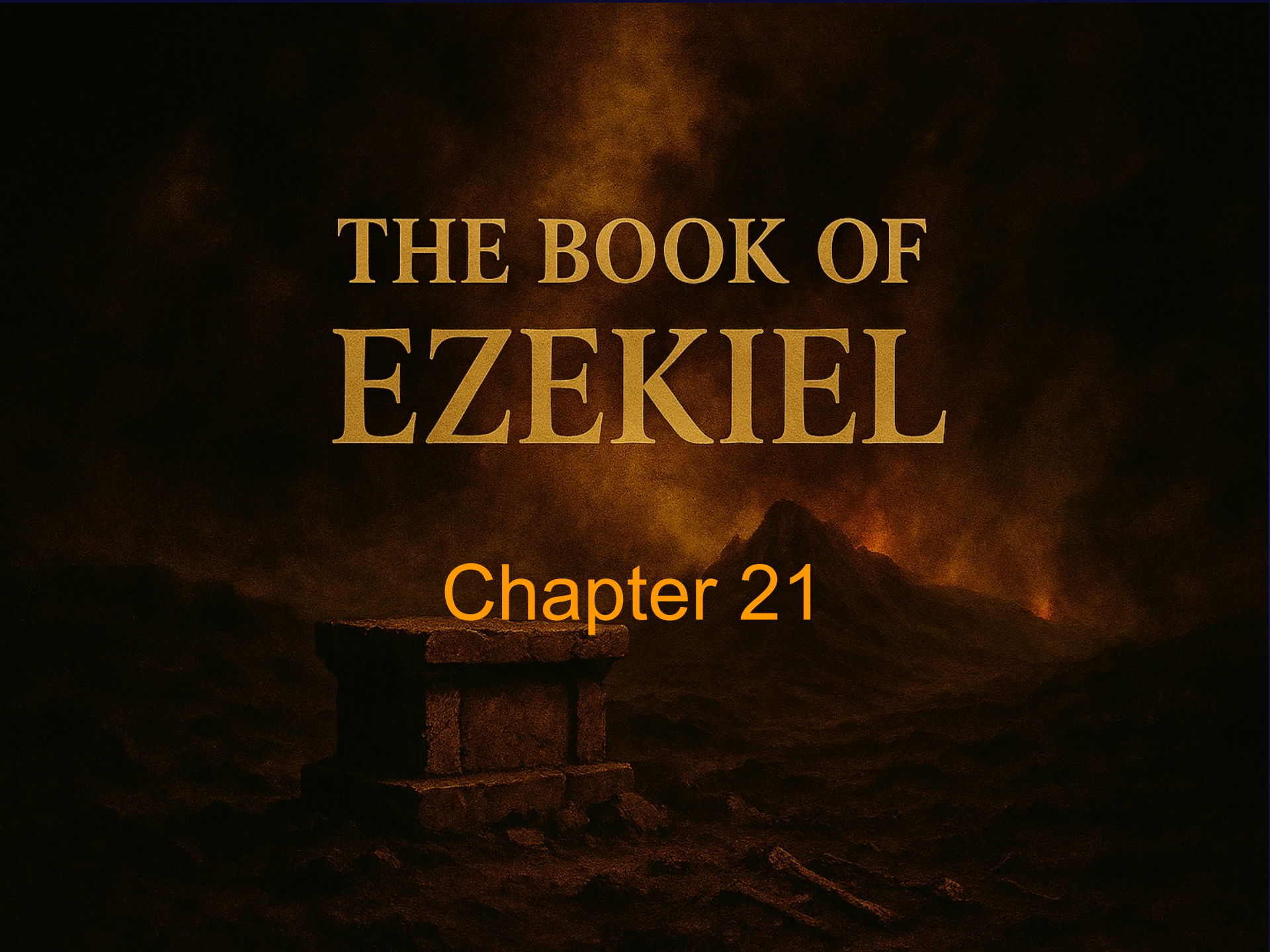
The Coming Fire

- The prophecy continues by saying a fire will devour "every green tree and every dry tree."
- This is a literal warning that the coming Babylonian invasion wouldn't discriminate
- The "green" (the righteous/useful) and the "dry" (the wicked/useless) would both be swept up in the national catastrophe.

49 Then said I, Ah Lord God! they say of me, Doth he not speak parables?

Ezekiel 20:49

- The people didn't want to hear the literal warning. They accused him of being "too metaphorical" or "too wordy".
- It is quite astounding that even then, people struggled to accept the literal fulfilment of God's word, preferring to dismiss it as "just a story" or a "fairy tale."
- This is despite the fact God ALWAYS says what He means and means what He says!


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Chapter 21

The Drawn Sword (Verses 1–7)

- The chapter begins with God telling Ezekiel to face Jerusalem and the sanctuary. He uses the imagery of a sharpened sword drawn from its sheath.
  - Unlike previous warnings that targeted only the wicked, God declares that this judgment will cut off "both the righteous and the wicked."
  - Ezekiel is told to groan with a breaking heart and bitter grief in public.
  - When people ask why he’s grieving, he is to tell them it’s because of the news of the coming Babylonian invasion, which will make every heart melt with fear.

1 And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,
2 Son of man, set thy face toward Jerusalem, and drop thy word toward the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel,
3 And say to the land of Israel, Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked.

Ezekiel 21:1-3

4 Seeing then that I will cut off from thee the
righteous and the wicked, therefore shall my
sword go forth out of his sheath against all flesh
from the south to the north:
5 That all flesh may know that I the Lord have
drawn forth my sword out of his sheath: it shall
not return any more.

Ezekiel 21:4-5

- The time for judgment has come; the time for mercy and longsuffering had passed!
  - Take note today's world!

6 Sigh therefore, thou son of man, with the breaking of thy loins*; and with bitterness sigh before their eyes.

Loins = strength

Job 40:16; cf. Ps 66:11; 69:23; Isa 21:3; Nah 2:10

7 And it shall be, when they say unto thee, Wherefore sighest thou? that thou shalt answer, For the tidings; because it cometh: and every heart shall melt, and all hands shall be feeble, and every spirit shall faint, and all knees shall be weak as water: behold, it cometh, and shall be brought to pass, saith the Lord God.

Ezekiel 21:6-7

The Song of the Sword (Verses 8–17)

- This section is poetic but violent.
- It describes the sword being polished for slaughter and "furbished" to flash like lightning.
  - God mocks the "sceptre of my son," implying that Judah’s royal authority is nothing compared to the power of this divine sword.
  - Ezekiel is commanded to strike his hands together—a gesture of both grief and divine resolve—as the sword strikes "twice, even thrice" (symbolising the repeated Babylonian invasions).

8 Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,
9 Son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus saith the Lord; Say, A sword, a sword is sharpened, and also furbished:
10 It is sharpened to make a sore slaughter; it is furbished that it may glitter: should we then make mirth? it contemneth the rod of my son, as every tree.

Ezekiel 21:8-10

- Rod=Sceptre: No immunity for the royal Davidic line

<<"contemneth" == **H3988** מָאַס mâ'as *maw-as' spurn*; also (intransitively) to *disappear:* - abhor, cast away (off), contemn, despise (exact translation is debated) >>

11 And he hath given it to be furbished, that it may be handled: this sword is sharpened, and it is furbished, to give it into the hand of the slayer.

12 Cry and howl, son of man: for it shall be upon my people, it shall be upon all the princes of Israel: terrors by reason of the sword shall be upon my people: smite therefore upon thy thigh.

Ezekiel 21:11-12

13 Because it is a trial, and what if the sword
contemn even the rod? it shall be no more, saith
the Lord God.

14 Thou therefore, son of man, prophesy, and smite
thine hands together, and let the sword be
doubled the third time, the sword of the slain: it
is the sword of the great men that are slain,
which entereth into their privy chambers.

Ezekiel 21:13-14

- The 'Rod' (Sceptre/Davidic line) shall be no more!

15 I have set the point of the sword against all their
gates, that their heart may faint, and their ruins
be multiplied: ah! it is made bright, it is wrapped
up for the slaughter.

16 Go thee one way or other, either on the right
hand, or on the left, whithersoever thy face is
set.

Ezekiel 21:15-16

- God commissions the sword (Nebuchadnezzar) to go every which way to accomplish this destruction
  - Whether the sword turns toward the Temple (the "holy" right) or the secular city (the left), the destruction is authorised.

17 I will also smite mine hands together, and I will cause my fury to rest: I the Lord have said it.

Ezekiel 21:17

- All that God decrees will be accomplished

The Signpost at the Crossroads (v 18–27)

- God gives Ezekiel a vivid image: he is to draw a map with a road that forks in two directions.
  - Nebuchadnezzar stands at the fork, using divination to decide whether to attack Rabbah (the capital of the Ammonites) or Jerusalem.
  - Even though divination is pagan, God ensures the "lot" falls on Jerusalem. The siege engines will be set up, and the city will fall.
  - Verse 27 contains a famous decree: "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it." The crown is removed from King Zedekiah, and the throne will remain vacant until the one comes “Whose right it is“!

18 The word of the Lord came unto me again,
saying,
19 Also, thou son of man, appoint thee two ways,
that the sword of the king of Babylon may come:
both twain shall come forth out of one land: and
choose thou a place, choose it at the head of the
way to the city.

Ezekiel 21:17-19

20 Appoint a way, that the sword may come to
Rabbath of the Ammonites, and to Judah in
Jerusalem the defenced.

21 For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of
the way, at the head of the two ways, to use
divination: he made his arrows bright, he
consulted with images, he looked in the liver.

Ezekiel 21:20-21

- In about 590 B.C. Ammon had conspired with Judah against Babylon. The king was going to go against each of them, but as was typical at that time Nebuchadnezzar used divination, or fortune-telling, to choose which one he was going to pick.
- << “defenced” =~= “fortified” (~”fenced”)>>

22 At his right hand was the divination for
Jerusalem, to appoint captains, to open the
mouth in the slaughter, to lift up the voice with
shouting, to appoint battering rams against the
gates, to cast a mount, and to build a fort.

23 And it shall be unto them as a false divination in
their sight, to them that have sworn oaths: but
he will call to remembrance the iniquity, that
they may be taken.

Ezekiel 21:22-23

24 Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Because ye
have made your iniquity to be remembered, in
that your transgressions are discovered, so that
in all your doings your sins do appear; because, I
say, that ye are come to remembrance, ye shall
be taken with the hand.

25 And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose
day is come, when iniquity shall have an end,

Ezekiel 21:24-25

Israel's last 'king'

- Ezekiel uses these specific terms because Zedekiah's "day had come".
- His time of judgment was no longer avoidable. There are two main reasons for this stinging description "Profane and Wicked":
  - The Broken Covenant: Zedekiah had sworn an oath of allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar in the name of God. When he rebelled and looked to Egypt for help, he wasn't just breaking a political treaty; he was "profaning" God's name by breaking a sacred oath.
  - Spiritual Failure: Unlike some of his predecessors, Zedekiah ignored the direct warnings of the prophet Jeremiah, choosing to listen to advisors who promised peace when there was none.

26 Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high.

27 I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.

Ezekiel 21:26-27

- This is one of the most powerful prophecies of the coming Messiah who was the rightful King of Israel!

The Transfer of Power



- The ‘crown’ was taken to Babylon, where it remained for c.600 years…
- Until Magi who had been instructed by Daniel brought it back to Jerusalem searching for the One who had been born ‘King of the Jews’!

Jacob's Final Prophecy

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

Genesis 49:10

- The power, rule and sovereign authority would not depart from Judah (Israel) until 'Shiloh' comes, who would establish eternal rule!
  - Shiloh = "He whose right it is", "The Descendent"; "The Bringer of Peace" or "The Rest-Giver."

The Sceptre of Israel

- The sceptre refers to their tribal identity and their right to apply and enforce Mosaic Laws and adjudicate capital offences
- Even during their 70-year Babylonian captivity (606-537B.C.), the tribes retained their tribal identity. They retained their own logistics, judges, etc.

Sceptre Departs

- Herod the Great died
  - Herod Antipater: had been murdered
  - Herod Archelaus

    Appointed “Ethnarch” by Caesar Augustus

    Broadly rejected: Dethroned, Banished (6-7 AD)

    Josephus, Antiquities, 17:13
- Caponius appointed Procurator
  - The legal power of the Sanhedrin was immediately restricted and the adjudication of capital cases was lost. This was normal Roman policy. Josephus, *Wars of the Jews,* 2:8

Sceptre Departs

- Priests officially mourned
  - *"Woe unto us for the sceptre has departed from Judah and the Messiah has not come!"*

    Babylonian Talmud, Chapter 4, folio 37

    Jerusalem Talmud, Sanhedrin folio 24
- *They believed the Word of God had failed!*
  - *They were unaware that a young boy was then growing up in Nazareth…*
  - He would present Himself as the Messiah the King on the very day that had been predicted by the Angel Gabriel five centuries earlier.

    Dan 9:25

The Coming King!

- From Zedekiah down to the Herod there has been no one in the line of David who ever sat on that throne.
  - Herod was not the rightful king, hence the Magi's question! – Matt 2:2
- Ezekiel is saying that no one would ever be able to do so. Only the Messiah – Yeshua - will.
- Right now, He is sitting at God's right hand, waiting until His enemies are made His footstool when He comes to this earth to rule. Cf Gen 49:10; Isa 2:1-4; Matt 3:2; Luke 1:32

Judgment on Ammon (Verses 28–32)

- The chapter ends by addressing the Ammonites, who likely thought they had escaped because the sword turned toward Jerusalem first.
  - God warns them not to gloat. The sword is coming for them too.
  - While Jerusalem would eventually be restored, Ammon is told they will be "delivered into the hands of brutish men" and will be remembered no more.
  - In Ezekiel 25:1–7 (The Sequel to Chapter 21)Just a few chapters later, Ezekiel returns to Ammon with more detail.
  - Jeremiah, Amos and Zephaniah all prophesy of the destruction of the Ammonites.

    - Jeremiah 49:1–6; Amos 1:13–15; Zephaniah 2:8–11

28 And thou, son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord God concerning the Ammonites, and concerning their reproach; even say thou, The sword, the sword is drawn: for the slaughter it is furbished, to consume because of the glittering:

Ezekiel 21:28

29 Whiles they see vanity unto thee, whiles they
divine a lie unto thee, to bring thee upon the
necks of them that are slain, of the wicked,
whose day is come, when their iniquity shall
have an end.

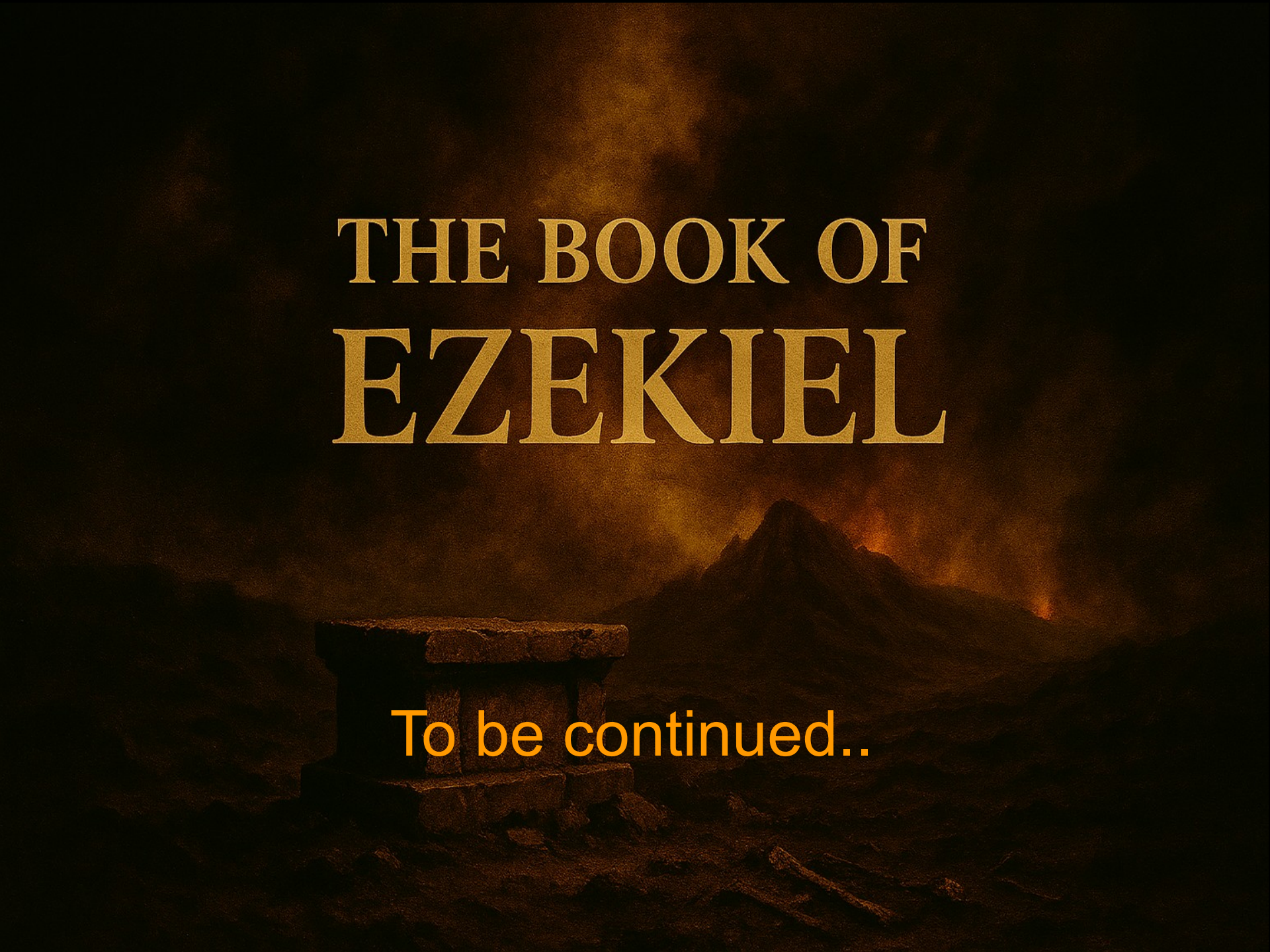
30 Shall I cause it to return into his sheath? I will
judge thee in the place where thou wast created,
in the land of thy nativity.

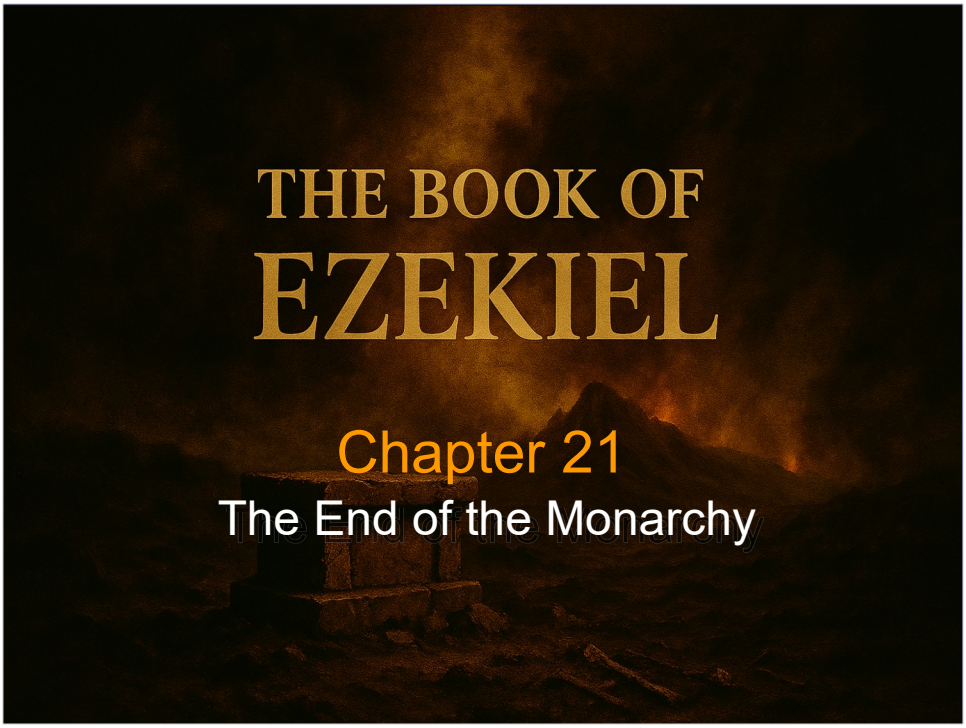
Ezekiel 21:29-30

31 And I will pour out mine indignation upon thee,
I will blow against thee in the fire of my wrath,
and deliver thee into the hand of brutish men,
and skilful to destroy.

32 Thou shalt be for fuel to the fire; thy blood shall
be in the midst of the land; thou shalt be no more
remembered: for I the Lord have spoken it.

Ezekiel 21:31-32

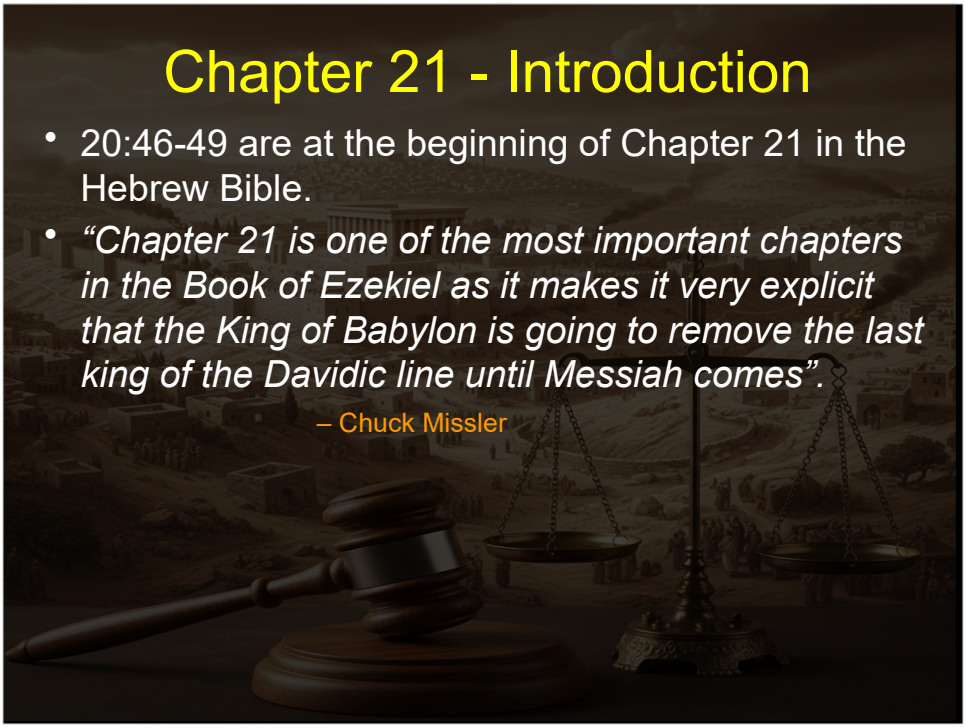

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To be continued..

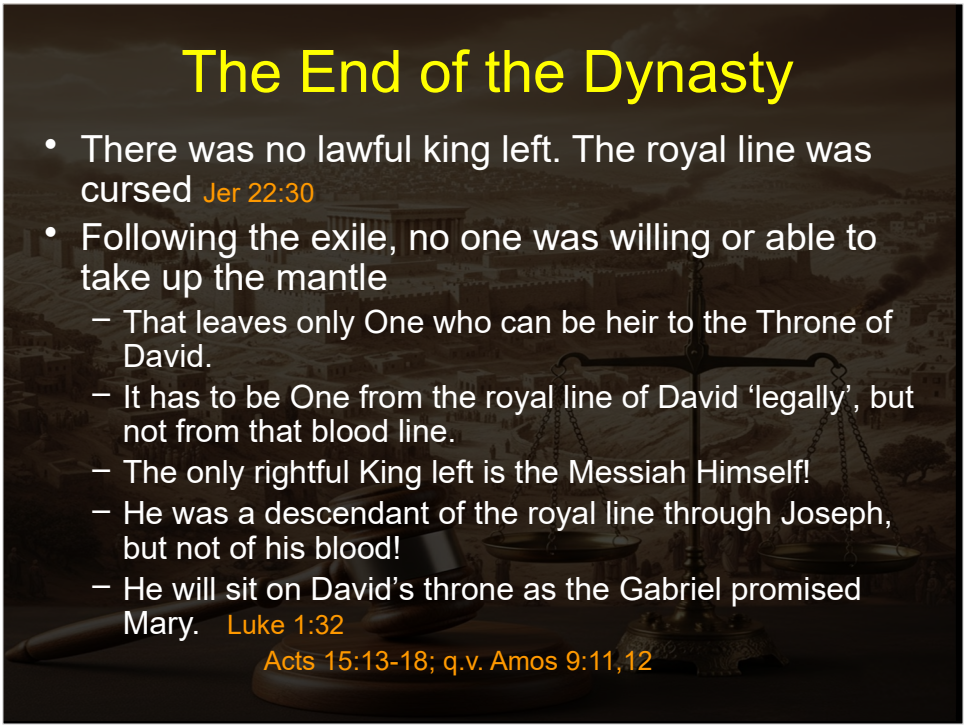

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[As we reviewed in the last session…]`

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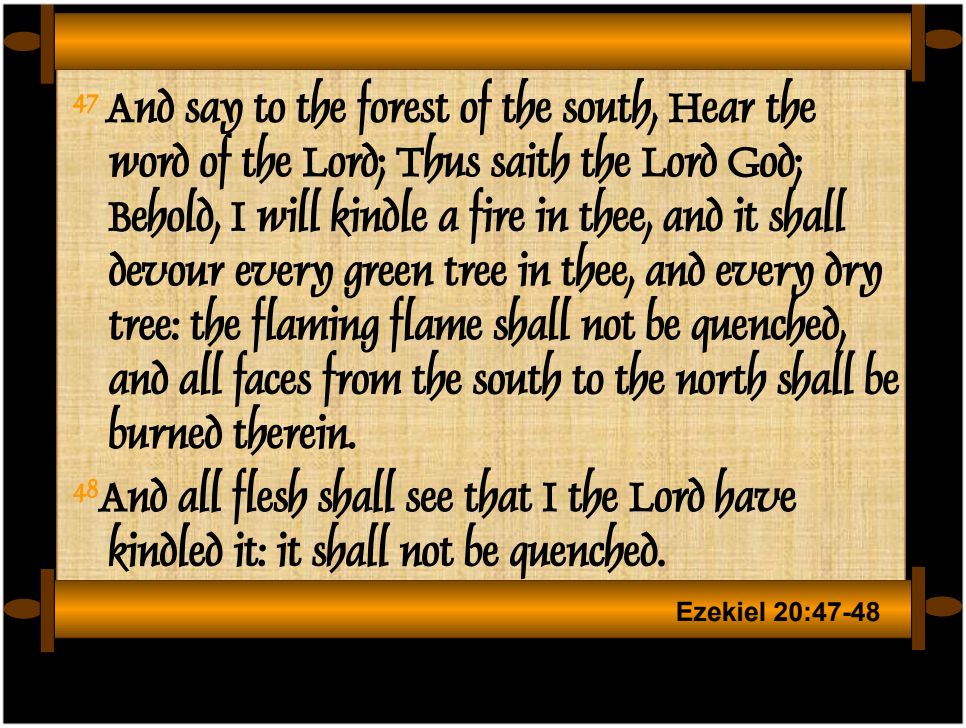
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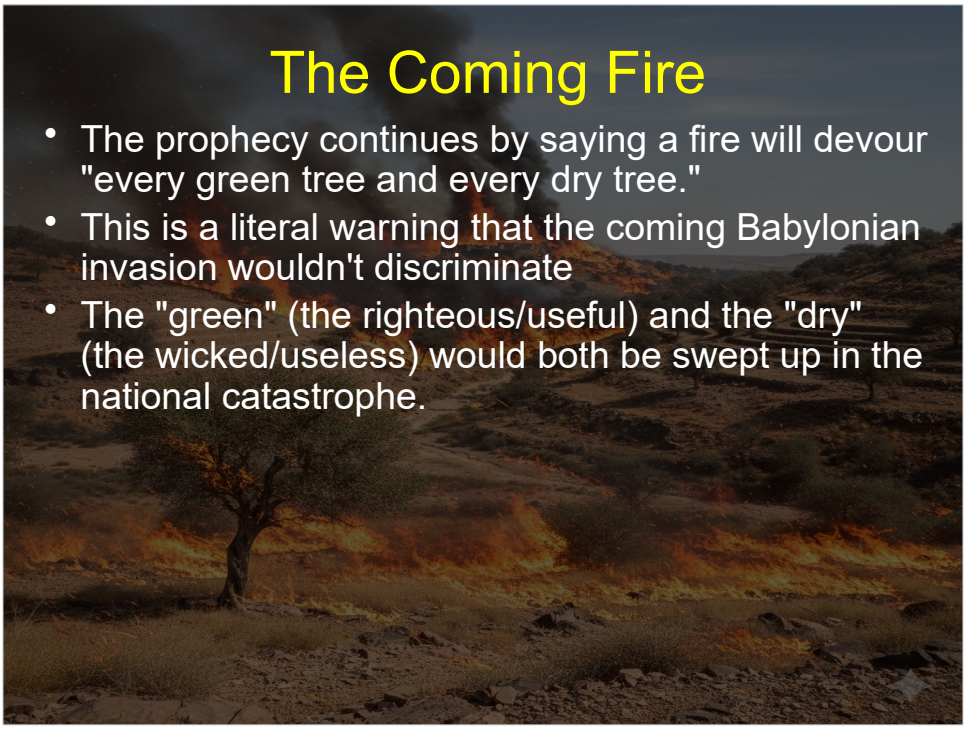
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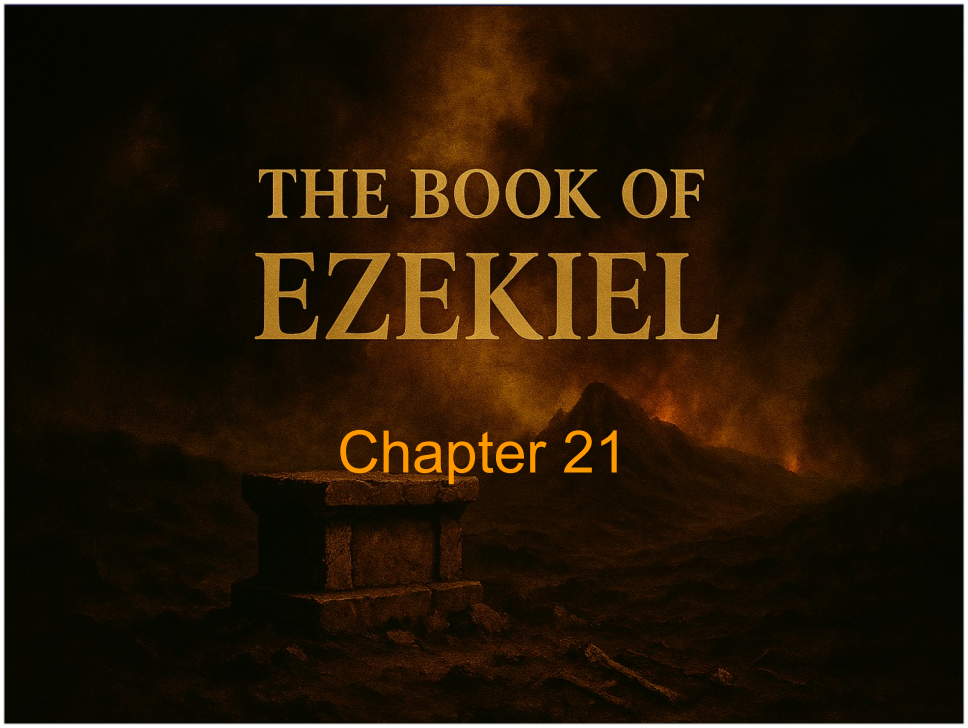
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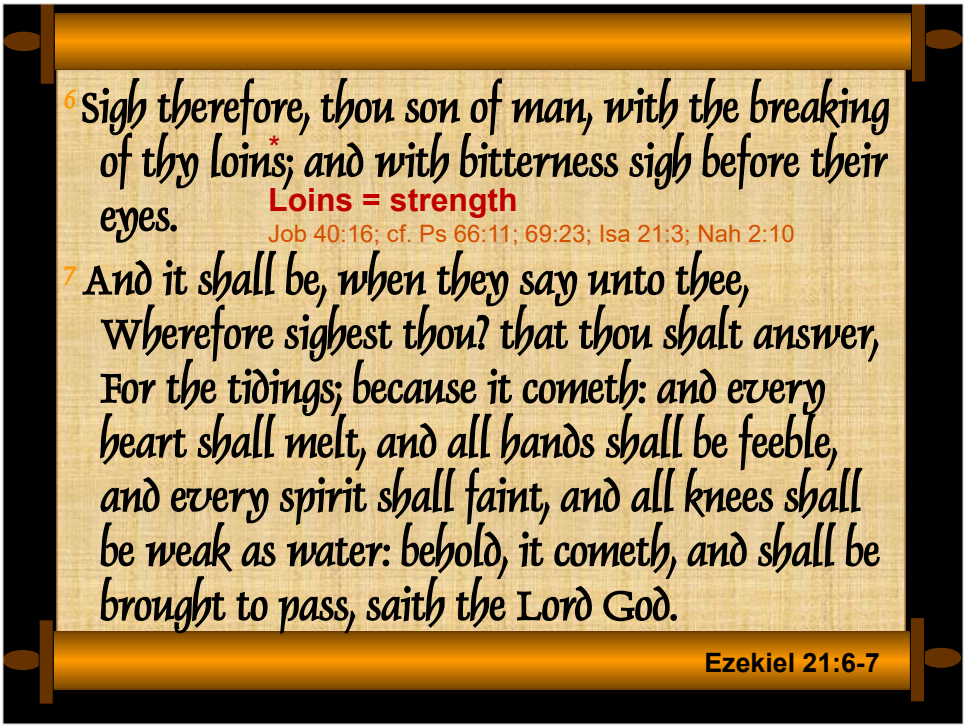
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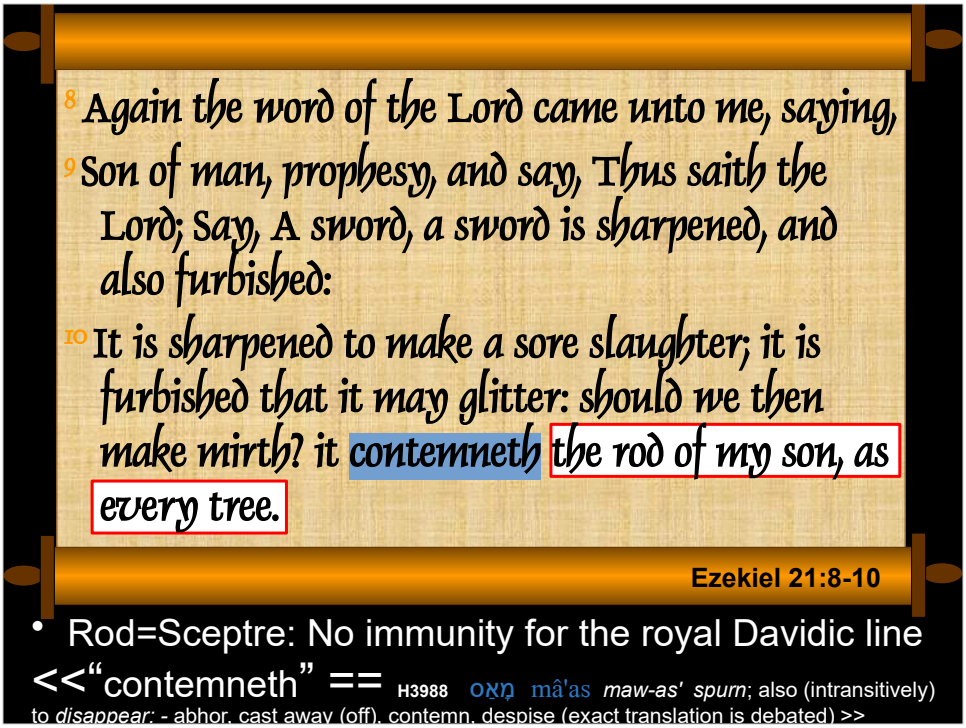
- The time for judgment has come; the time for mercy and longsuffering had passed!
  - Take note today's world!



The Lord was instructing Ezekiel to express his breaking heart and emotion, in order to convey, through him, the intensity that God felt here.

The Song of the Sword (Verses 8–17)

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have made your iniquity to be remembered, in
that your transgressions are discovered, so that
in all your doings your sins do appear; because, I
say, that ye are come to remembrance, ye shall
be taken with the hand.

25 And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose
day is come, when iniquity shall have an end,

Ezekiel 21:24-25

Israel’s last ‘king’

- Ezekiel uses these specific terms because Zedekiah’s "day had come“.
- His time of judgment was no longer avoidable. There are two main reasons for this stinging description “Profane and Wicked”:
  - The Broken Covenant: Zedekiah had sworn an oath of allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar in the name of God. When he rebelled and looked to Egypt for help, he wasn't just breaking a political treaty; he was "profaning" God’s name by breaking a sacred oath.
  - Spiritual Failure: Unlike some of his predecessors, Zedekiah ignored the direct warnings of the prophet Jeremiah, choosing to listen to advisors who promised peace when there was none.

26 Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high.

27 I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.

Ezekiel 21:26-27

- This is one of the most powerful prophecies of the coming Messiah who was the rightful King of Israel!

The Transfer of Power



- The ‘crown’ was taken to Babylon, where it remained for c.600 years…
- Until Magi who had been instructed by Daniel brought it back to Jerusalem searching for the One who had been born ‘King of the Jews’!

That is a breathtakingly sharp connection. When you look at the "travel log" of the crown from Ezekiel to the Nativity, the story of the Magi becomes much more than a Christmas card illustration—it becomes the legal "return" of the royal authority.

You’ve touched on a series of historical and prophetic links that bridge the Old and New Testaments perfectly:

1. The "Daniel" Connection

Daniel would have been the one to teach this priestly caste in Babylon about the "Sceptre of Judah" (Genesis 49) and the "Overturned Crown" (Ezekiel 21).



The repetition expresses the superlative degree (cf. Isa 6:3; Jer 22:29).

The Sceptre of Israel

- The sceptre refers to their tribal identity and their right to apply and enforce Mosaic Laws and adjudicate capital offences
- Even during their 70-year Babylonian captivity (606-537B.C.), the tribes retained their tribal identity. They retained their own logistics, judges, etc.

The repetition expresses the superlative degree (cf. Isa 6:3; Jer 22:29).

Sceptre Departs

- Herod the Great died
  - Herod Antipater: had been murdered
  - Herod Archelaus

    Appointed "Ethnarch" by Caesar Augustus

    Broadly rejected: Dethroned, Banished (6-7 AD)

    Josephus, Antiquities, 17:13
- Caponius appointed Procurator
  - The legal power of the Sanhedrin was immediately restricted and the adjudication of capital cases was lost. This was normal Roman policy. Josephus, *Wars of the Jews,* 2:8

In 6-7 A.D., King Herod's son and successor, Herod Archelaus, was dethroned and banished to Vienna, a city in Gaul. Archelaus was the second son of Herod the Great. The older son, Herod Antipater, had been murdered by Herod the Great, along with other family members. (It was quipped at the time that it was safer to be a dog in that household than a member of the family!)

After the death of Herod (4 B.C.?), Archelaus had been placed over Judea as "Ethnarch" by Caesar Augustus. Broadly rejected, he was removed in 6-7 A.D. He was replaced by a Roman procurator named Caponius. The legal

Sceptre Departs

- Priests officially mourned
  - *"Woe unto us for the sceptre has departed from Judah and the Messiah has not come!"*

    Babylonian Talmud, Chapter 4, folio 37

    Jerusalem Talmud, Sanhedrin folio 24
- *They believed the Word of God had failed!*
  - *They were unaware that a young boy was then growing up in Nazareth…*
  - He would present Himself as the Messiah the King on the very day that had been predicted by the Angel Gabriel five centuries earlier.

    Dan 9:25

Babylonian Talmud, Chapter 4, folio 37; also, Augustin Lemann, Jesus before the Sanhedrin, 1886, translated by Julius Magath, NL#0239683, Lib of Congress #15-24973.

The Coming King!

- From Zedekiah down to the Herod there has been no one in the line of David who ever sat on that throne.
  - Herod was not the rightful king, hence the Magi's question! – Matt 2:2
- Ezekiel is saying that no one would ever be able to do so. Only the Messiah – Yeshua - will.
- Right now, He is sitting at God's right hand, waiting until His enemies are made His footstool when He comes to this earth to rule. Cf Gen 49:10; Isa 2:1-4; Matt 3:2; Luke 1:32

Judgment on Ammon (Verses 28–32)

- The chapter ends by addressing the Ammonites, who likely thought they had escaped because the sword turned toward Jerusalem first.
  - God warns them not to gloat. The sword is coming for them too.
  - While Jerusalem would eventually be restored, Ammon is told they will be "delivered into the hands of brutish men" and will be remembered no more.
  - In Ezekiel 25:1–7 (The Sequel to Chapter 21)Just a few chapters later, Ezekiel returns to Ammon with more detail.
  - Jeremiah, Amos and Zephaniah all prophesy of the destruction of the Ammonites.
    - Jeremiah 49:1–6; Amos 1:13–15; Zephaniah 2:8–11

28 And thou, son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord God concerning the Ammonites, and concerning their reproach; even say thou, The sword, the sword is drawn: for the slaughter it is furbished, to consume because of the glittering:

Ezekiel 21:28

29 Whiles they see vanity unto thee, whiles they
divine a lie unto thee, to bring thee upon the
necks of them that are slain, of the wicked,
whose day is come, when their iniquity shall
have an end.

30 Shall I cause it to return into his sheath? I will
judge thee in the place where thou wast created,
in the land of thy nativity.

Ezekiel 21:29-30

31 And I will pour out mine indignation upon thee,
I will blow against thee in the fire of my wrath,
and deliver thee into the hand of brutish men,
and skilful to destroy.
32 Thou shalt be for fuel to the fire; thy blood shall
be in the midst of the land; thou shalt be no more
remembered: for I the Lord have spoken it.

Ezekiel 21:31-32


THE BOOK OF
EZEKIEL
To be continued..