



HIDDEN WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

with Chazan Arik Wollheim

Ezekiel's Wife

1. The Book of Ezekiel BY Dr. Solomon B. Frenhof from: myjewishlearning.com

The Book of Ezekiel has always been a problem book. As early as the second century C.E., in the time of the Mishnah, there were doubts and concern about it. These doubts were strong enough, in those early days, to raise the question of whether Ezekiel should be one of the biblical books. The Talmud ([Sabbath13b](#)) relates that Hananiah ben Hezekiah (one of the teachers of the Mishnah, who lived about the year 70) used up three hundred measures of oil (to study by) in order to harmonize the laws in Ezekiel with those given in the Torah. If not for this effort, some believed, the book would have been kept out of the Bible. The phrase used was: "The Book of Ezekiel would have been hidden away" (*nignaz Sefer Yehezkel*).

The rabbis were greatly troubled by the fact that the Book of Ezekiel gives certain laws, chiefly as to the Temple procedures, which actually contradict the laws given in the Book of Leviticus. They had a further objection: The opening chapters (chapters 1-3) of the Book of Ezekiel present a detailed picture of God coming in a chariot, surrounded by retinues of angels, etc. This picture, called "the arrangement of the chariot" (*ma'aseh merkavah*), became the starting point of special mystical studies. Though deemed important by the rabbis, such studies were considered dangerous for the uninitiated, and therefore the rabbis said that these chapters should not be studied, except by the learned few (*Mishnah Hagigah2: 1*). How, then, could they permit such a book to be part of the Bible, to be read by anyone?

These legal and mystical objections of the rabbis were ultimately not deemed sufficient grounds for excluding the Book of Ezekiel from the Bible. Evidently the rabbis held the Book of Ezekiel to be authentic. Hence, they felt, it was an inspired prophecy, properly belonging in the Bible, and its difficulties were difficulties which could be resolved.

Ezekiel: A Return to Ecstasy

What bewilders and disturbs modern scholars about the book is, in a way, analogous to what puzzled the rabbis in talmudic times. The book certainly does differ from the Torah, but modern scholarship is not troubled so much by this as by the fact that, because Ezekiel is so different from the other prophets, the scholarly conclusions and consensus derived from studies of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah do not seem to apply to him at all.

The great literary prophets themselves differed greatly from the schools and bands of prophets that preceded them in Israelite history. The earlier prophets were ecstatics (such as those Saul joined, and was moved to prophesy with, upon leaving Samuel—[1 Samuel 10:9-10](#)). Here the word "prophesy" does not mean that Saul made some great and meaningful utterance, but simply that he spoke words which came out of him in his semitrance.

The literary prophets (besides Ezekiel) did not need mass hypnosis of a band or school of prophets. They spoke with passion, indeed, but a passion born of conviction. Ezekiel, like the literary prophets, teaches high ethical ideals, often in a poetic and eloquent manner; but he also falls into trances, struck dumb sometimes for days, unable to speak. He sees grandiose, multiform visions. He is a literary prophet like Isaiah and Amos, but he is also an ecstatic prophet, a reversion to an older time.

A New Focus on the Individual

There is another difference. The other prophets always addressed the nation as a whole, denouncing it for social sins, calling upon it to achieve social justice. Ezekiel, like the literary prophets, also addressed the nation, but in addition



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he developed a new doctrine of personal responsibility for right and wrong. This, by the way, was one of the contradictions which the rabbis found between Ezekiel and the Torah. Moses said "...visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children" ([Exodus 20:5](#)), and Ezekiel said that children shall not be punished for the sins of the fathers—"only the soul that sinneth, it shall die" ([Ezekiel 18](#)). Ezekiel resembled the literary prophets in that the nation was his audience, but he differed from them in that the individual too became his audience.

A Greater Emphasis on the Temple

Finally, while it may still be disputed whether the great literary prophets completely opposed the ritual observances of the Temple--the sacrifices, the incense--there is no doubt that they gave it a secondary place in the order of man's duties: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord ... with burnt-offerings?...It hath been told thee, O man, what is good ... to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." ([Micah 6:6](#), 8). These words of Micah were typical of all the great literary prophets. Social ethics and monotheism were the cardinal virtues for the literary prophets.

While Ezekiel preached ethical living, he also laid great emphasis on the ritual. The whole second half of his book, from chapter 40 on, is a description of the Temple that will be built after the restoration and the details of the duties of the priests and the sacrifices which should be offered. It is inconceivable that Amos or Isaiah would have recorded such a picture of the future.

Ezekiel's Career

Very few details of Ezekiel's life are known, since the Book of Ezekiel contains only a few references of a biographical nature. We are told that he was a priest, the son of Buzi, and evidently a member of the Zadok family of priests who were in charge of the sanctuary in Jerusalem (1: 3). Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, first captured Jerusalem in 597 B.C.E. and carried off King Jehoiachin and the leaders of the people to Babylon (11 Kings 24: 14). Ezekiel was one of those who were led away in the first captivity, and he dates his book from the years after the exile of Jehoiachin.

In Babylon Ezekiel lived in the city of Tel Aviv on the Chebar Canal. He was married and widowed (24: 16-18), and he preached his sermons in the exile. The last date in the book is the twenty-seventh year of his exile, and therefore he preached for twenty-two years.

Ezekiel was revered by subsequent generations. The traditional tomb of Ezekiel was a shrine for many centuries. Further evidence of his importance to succeeding generations is the frequency with which sections of his book are used as prophetic readings in the synagogue. In spite of the fact that the Mishnah specifically forbids the public reading of two sections of Ezekiel ([Megillah 4: 10](#)), there are ten prophetic readings from Ezekiel.

That Ezekiel was chosen so frequently for prophetic reading seems somewhat strange, considering the doubts the rabbis had about the book because of the laws in it which seem to contradict the analogous laws in the Torah and also because of their feeling that the mystical portions of the chariot had to be kept from public reading.

A Powerful Union of Priestly and Prophetic

It would seem that Ezekiel came to occupy so large a place in the synagogue service precisely because of the characteristics that awakened Wellhausen's scorn [Wellhausen was an early source-critical scholar, who maintained the rather anti-Jewish conviction that Judaism had been "corrupted" by the "dead" ritual of the priestly system, which he considered to be a late development -Ed] and led him to say that Ezekiel was really only a priest in



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prophetic clothing. All the great literary prophets before Ezekiel had a negative attitude toward the Temple and its ritual, and this fact gave rise to the popular sermonic phrase, “priest versus prophet,” which implies that we must make a choice—following either the priest or the prophet, believing either in ritual or in righteousness.

Ezekiel indicates that such an opposition between ritual and righteousness is unrealistic. As far as he was concerned, the true worship of God involved both the prophetic emphasis on social justice and the priestly ritual observed in the sacred Temple. He emphasized both in his book, combining the drama of ceremony and the dedication of ethics. This dual emphasis exerted a powerful influence on Jewish history.

Judaism followed Ezekiel. It did not become a pure ethical system, following the prophets alone, or a mechanical ritual system, following the priests. Judaism became, as Ezekiel meant it to be, a pageant of ceremony ennobled by prophetic idealism.

Because it was Ezekiel who pioneered the principle that ritual and righteousness need not compete for the soul of the true worshiper of God, and that priest and prophet can teach together, one may well say that he, more than any other, was responsible for the fact that at every Jewish public worship service, on every Sabbath and holiday, a reading from the prophets always follows the reading from the Torah. This liturgical practice helped ensure that the words of the great literary prophets were taken into the heart of Judaism and preserved for succeeding generations.

“Father” of Jewish Mysticism

Furthermore, Ezekiel’s strange, mystical mood, which made him see those elaborate and magnificent visions of the heavenly chariot, became the basis for Jewish mystical studies which later developed into the Kabbalah. When we consider the vast influence of the Kabbalah all through Jewish history, one may perhaps say that Ezekiel, whose words were the soil in which it grew, was certainly the most influential, if not necessarily the grandest, of all the literary prophets.

2. The Prophet Ezekiel By Yehuda Altein and Alex Heppenheimer from: Chabad.org

Ezekiel (Yechezkel) was a prophet who lived in Babylonia at the time of the destruction of the First Temple. Among his more famous prophecies, which were compiled in the Book of Ezekiel, are his visions of the Divine Chariot, the Valley of the Dry Bones and the Third Temple.

Ezekiel was born in Israel to his father Buzi, a priest,¹ and it was there that he began his career as a prophet.² Then, in the year 3327 (434 BCE), Jerusalem was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylonia. Nebuchadnezzar exiled the Jewish king Jehoiachin (Jeconiah) along with ten thousand captives, including the king’s family, the nobility of the land and the leaders of the army.³ Among the captives was the prophet Ezekiel.⁴

Ezekiel spent the rest of his life in Babylonia, where he envisioned most of his prophecies. Ezekiel’s prophecies are unique in that they were experienced in Babylonia, although as a rule the Divine spirit does not rest in the Diaspora. Nevertheless, since Ezekiel had already begun to prophesy in the Land of Israel, he continued to do so after leaving it.⁵

Perhaps since he did not dwell in the Land of Israel, Ezekiel did not commit his prophecies to writing. Instead, the Men of the Great Assembly—a group of 120 Jewish prophets and sages who lived c. 3400 (360 BCE)—accepted the task of compiling the Book of Ezekiel.⁶



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The Divine Chariot

The book of Ezekiel begins with his famous prophecy of the Divine Chariot. In this vision,⁷ which he saw in the year 3332 (429 BCE) while standing on the banks of the Chebar River,⁸ Ezekiel describes in vivid detail G-d's supernal throne, supported by four angel-like creatures with four distinct faces: that of a human, a lion, an ox and an eagle.⁹

This chapter of Ezekiel serves as the foundation for much of Kabbalistic literature. In fact, the esoteric body of Torah as a whole is referred to in the Talmud as Maaseh Merkavah—"the making of the Divine Chariot."¹⁰

This portion is read as the haftarah on the first day of Shavuot. Shavuot commemorates the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai, when G-d revealed Himself accompanied by multitudes of angels—a theme related to Ezekiel's vision.¹¹

Ezekiel's Style: Word Pictures and Technical Descriptions

"You are to them like a song on the flute, which has a beautiful voice and plays well," G-d tells Ezekiel.¹² Ironically, Ezekiel is one of the few prophets whose book is largely written in prose. Yet his prophecies include some of the most soul-stirring word pictures of G-d's relationship with His people, the importance of each of its individuals to Him, and of the eternity of their mission.

In one of these, he begins by picturing the Jewish people as an infant abandoned, uncared-for, outdoors:

On the day you were born, your umbilical cord was not cut, you were not washed with water for cleansing, nor were you powdered or swaddled. No eye pitied you [enough] to do for you any of those, to have mercy on you, and you were cast onto the open field... I passed by you and saw you downtrodden with your blood, and I said to you, "With your blood, live," and I said to you, "With your blood, live" ...¹³

She is then rescued by a benefactor who takes care of her, weds her, and bedecks her in the most exquisite finery—only for her to then, as Ezekiel goes on to describe in equally compelling detail, display shocking ingratitude in using these very gifts in pursuit of foreign gods and unneeded foreign alliances. In vivid strokes, he goes on to detail the consequences of this behavior. Yet after all that, the Benefactor's relationship with his ward remains intact: "I shall remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I shall establish for you an everlasting covenant."

Further on, Ezekiel uses another metaphor, of G-d as the Shepherd of His people:

My flock strayed throughout all the mountains and upon every lofty hill, and upon the entire face of the land My flock scattered—and none searches or seeks... For so said the L-rd G-d: Behold I am here, and I shall search for My flocks and I shall seek them out... and I will save them from all the places where they have scattered on a cloudy and dark day. I will take them out from among the nations, and I will gather them from the lands and bring them to their land, and I will shepherd them to the mountains of Israel... I will seek the lost and I will retrieve the one who went astray; I will bind up the broken and I will strengthen the sick...¹⁴

And in the following passage, he encapsulates of thousands of years of Jewish history and where it is all to lead:

...For their iniquity the House of Israel was exiled, because they betrayed Me, and I hid My face from them, and I delivered them into the hands of their adversaries, and they all fell by the sword. I acted towards them in keeping with their defilement and their transgressions, and I hid My face from them. Therefore, so said the L-rd G-d: Now I shall return to the captivity of Jacob, and I shall have compassion on the House of Israel, and I shall be zealous for My Holy Name... When I return them from the peoples and gather them from the lands of their enemies, I shall be sanctified through them before the eyes of many nations. And they will know that I am the L-rd their G-d when I



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exiled them to the nations and when I shall gather them to their land; I will not leave any of them there. I shall no longer hide My face from them...¹⁵

At the same time, Ezekiel seamlessly weaves in phraseology from the Torah book of Vayikra (Leviticus), with its detailed technical descriptions of the sacrificial system and the laws pertaining to the kohanim (priests). In the last chapters of his book he blends point-by-point blueprints of the future Temple with lyrical descriptions of G-d's Presence coming to rest in it:

He [Ezekiel's angelic guide] measured it on all four sides, with a wall surrounding it, of length 500 [rods] and width 500, to separate between the holy and the mundane. Then he led me to the gate, a gate that faced eastward, and behold, the glory of the G-d of Israel came from the east; its sound was like that of abundant waters, and the earth shone with His glory... He said to me: Son of man! This is the place of My throne and this is the place of the soles of My feet, where I shall dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever.¹⁶

A Prophet of Destruction...

Many of the prophecies in the first half of the book of Ezekiel concern the imminent destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem as a result of the sins of the Jewish nation. Told that the people would not be receptive to his verbal messages, and that he would have to remain "mute" and refrain from rebuking them unless given a message by G-d,¹⁷ he was instead to accompany his prophecies with eloquent dramatizations of the events to come.

Ezekiel was instructed to take a brick and etch upon it an image of Jerusalem under siege.¹⁸ As a symbol of the privations the Jerusalemites would undergo, he was told to knead dough from wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet and spelt¹⁹ (a type of mixture that would be eaten only under dire conditions), to bake it using animal dung as fuel, and to eat small amounts of this "bread" for 390 days while lying otherwise immobile.²⁰ Then, too, he was to take hair from his head and beard, and enact with it the various fates of the Jews during and after the destruction: burned, struck with the sword, scattered, and a precious few to be "wrapped in his garments," representing the remnant who would survive the Babylonian exile and from whom the nation would be regenerated.²¹

So says the L-rd G-d: Since Jerusalem has spilled blood, its time has come. Since it has done abominable things, it has become contaminated...I will scatter you among the nations and spread you out among the lands; thus I will remove your impurity from within you.²²

In one grievous incident, Ezekiel's own wife died in a plague, symbolizing the destruction of the "delight of the Jews' eyes," the Temple. In keeping with this symbolism, Ezekiel was told to follow his usual routine and eschew the usual mourning practices, a true-to-life "dress rehearsal" of how the Jewish people would be unable to comfort one another because of their own grief (or perhaps unable to even display mourning, out of fear of the Babylonians).²³

Ultimately, Ezekiel's prophecies came to pass. In the year 3336 (425 BCE), on the tenth day of the month of Tevet, G-d instructed Ezekiel: "Write for yourself this date: today the king of Babylonia laid siege to Jerusalem."²⁴ In commemoration of this calamitous event, the tenth of Tevet (in December/January) is observed as a day of fasting and repentance.

Three years later, on the fifth of Tevet, a fugitive arrived from Jerusalem and reported the terrible news: a few months earlier the city had been conquered and the Temple had been burned.²⁵



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...And Consolation

After the Temple's destruction, Ezekiel's prophecies carried a different spirit.²⁶ Instead of the rebuker, he was now the comforter, foretelling better times, when Israel would return to its land and G-d's spirit would rest among them once more.

So says the L-rd G-d: I will gather the house of Israel from the nations where they have been scattered...they will dwell on their land that I have given to My servant Jacob...I will execute judgments upon all those who scoff at them, and they will know that I am your G-d.²⁷

One of Ezekiel's prophecies related to the long-lasting division of the nation of Israel into two kingdoms. This rift had been in place since the times of Rehoboam, son of King Solomon (from the tribe of Judah), when ten of the tribes split from the other two and created a separate kingdom, ruled by Jeroboam, from the tribe of Ephraim.²⁸

Ezekiel was instructed to take two branches, upon one of which he inscribed the name Judah, and upon the second the name Ephraim. He was then told to hold the two branches together.²⁹ This symbolized that when the Jews would ultimately be redeemed from exile, the split between these two tribes would be healed, and the Jews would once again be ruled by a single leader.³⁰

Valley of the Dry Bones

One of Ezekiel's most famous visions is that of the Valley of the Dry Bones. Ezekiel was transported to a valley filled with dry human bones. He was told to instruct the bones to join together and to be covered with sinews, flesh and skin. This was followed by an instruction to the souls to enter the bodies and revive them.

[G-d] said to me: Son of man! These bones represent the house of Israel. They say, "Our bones have dried out, our hope is lost!" Tell them as follows: "So says G-d: I will open your graves and remove you from them, My nation, and bring you to the land of Israel...I will place My spirit within you, and you will live, and I will place you upon your land."³¹

The Talmud records a dispute whether the revival of these corpses was a spiritual vision or an actual occurrence. One sage, Rabbi Yehudah ben Beteira, testified, "I am their descendant, and here is a pair of tefillin I inherited from them."³²

The Third Temple

The book of Ezekiel culminates with a prophecy envisioned on Yom Kippur 3352 (410 BCE), fourteen years after the First Temple's destruction. Ezekiel saw himself being transported to the Temple Mount, where an angel holding a measuring rod gave him a detailed tour of the Third Temple, delineating the exact measurements of its various structures.³³

Ezekiel was instructed to impart this vision to his brethren, so that they would study the building's dimensions and be prepared to build it when the time would come.³⁴ In this way, the Jews heard a clear message: the Temple's recent destruction was merely temporary, and an edifice even greater than the first would ultimately be erected.

The Midrash records a discussion between G-d and Ezekiel:

Ezekiel said to G-d: Master of the World! The Jews are exiled in the land of their enemies, and You are telling me to inform them of the Temple's dimensions? Are they able to build it now? Wait until they are redeemed from exile, and then I will tell them!



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G-d responded: Just because My sons are in exile, My home should not be built? Tell them to study the form of the Temple, and it will be as if they are actually building it!³⁵

In this spirit, it is customary to study the Temple's dimensions, including these chapters of Ezekiel, during the Three Weeks of mourning (17 Tammuz–9 Av), utilizing these days to act toward the future rebuilding of the Temple.³⁶

This section of the book of Ezekiel also contains detailed descriptions of how the Third Temple will be run. Some of his statements appear to be in conflict with the rules given in the Torah: sacrifices are described which have no parallel elsewhere as to number and amount; regulations are given for the kohanim (priests) which according to Torah law apply only to the kohen gadol (high priest); and so forth.

The Talmud records how at one point the sages felt that it would be necessary to “hide away” the book of Ezekiel to prevent misunderstandings, but that it was saved for posterity by the herculean efforts of Chananyah ben Chizkiyah, who used up “300 barrels of oil” for lighting as he analyzed the verses and deduced their true meanings.³⁷

One approach is to read these verses in a less literal way, so as to yield the same laws as in the Torah albeit stated differently.³⁸ Another is to say that the sacrifices described apply only during the dedication period of the Third Temple, much as there were unusual offerings brought during the dedication of the desert Tabernacle and of the First and Second Temples,³⁹ and that the regulations for the kohanim are meant to place them on the higher level of the kohen gadol, appropriate to the greater level of sanctity that will prevail at that time.⁴⁰

Ezekiel's Passing and Burial

Ezekiel passed away sometime before the year 3364 (397 BCE), and was buried in Babylonia.⁴¹ In 3364 Nebuchadnezzar died, and his son Evil-Merodach, who assumed the Chaldean throne, released the Jewish king Jehoiachin from prison.⁴² Jehoiachin, accompanied by a large entourage of Jews, visited Ezekiel's gravesite and built a magnificent tomb upon the site, which also served as a synagogue.⁴³

Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela, who visited the tomb in c. 4930 (1170), recounted that Jews would journey there from Baghdad every year to pray during the High Holidays, and on Yom Kippur they would read from a Torah scroll written by Ezekiel's own hand.⁴⁴

Ezekiel's gravesite is believed to be in Al Kifl, Iraq, although this is not conclusive.

The Village Dweller

The Talmud points out⁴⁵ that while Ezekiel described the Divine Chariot in great detail, the prophet Isaiah depicted G-d's glory in short, concise terms. It compares their perspectives to those of a city dweller and a village dweller who both saw the king. The city dweller doesn't get excited by the fancy carriages, the uniforms and the royal display, because he sees these all the time. His focus is on the king himself. On the other hand, when a village dweller sees the entourage, since he rarely experiences such displays, every detail is exciting.

While this comparison seems to downplay Ezekiel's prophecy, it actually conveys a profound message. The purpose of Creation is to recognize how everything in the material world is a reflection of what exists in the higher realms. This idea is expressed in Ezekiel's vision, where the focus is on the details, from which G-d's greatness is perceived. From Ezekiel's words we understand that his vision was a likeness of the higher realms, and this is an awareness we must strive to internalize.⁴⁶



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FOOTNOTES

1. Ezekiel 1:3. See Radak ad loc. (citing Targum Yerushalmi), who identifies him with the prophet Jeremiah. 2. See note 5.
3. II Kings 24:10–16. 4. Rashi, Ezekiel 1:3. 5. Talmud, Moed Katan 25a; Rashi, Ezekiel 1:3. 6. Talmud, Bava Batra 15a.
7. Described in Ezekiel ch. 1 and (with slight variations) ch. 10. 8. Some identify this as the Euphrates River (see Radak, Ezekiel 1:1). 9. The neshet of Scripture is commonly translated as “eagle.” However, some assert that it is more properly identified as a vulture (see Sichat Chullin, Chullin 61a). 10. See Tal/mud, Chagigah 11b; Mishneh Torah, Hil. Yesodei Hatorah 2:11. 11. Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 494:4. 12. Ezekiel 33:32. 13. Ezekiel 16:4–6. 14. Ezekiel 34:6, 11–16. 15. Ezekiel 39:22–29. 16. Ezekiel 42:20–43:2, 7. 17. Ezekiel 3:26–27. 18. Ezekiel 4:1–3. 19. Some identify the last grain in the list as emmer wheat (see Tzimchei Hamikra, pp. 134–137). 20. Ezekiel 4:9–17. 21. Ezekiel 5:1–4. 22. Ezekiel 22:3, 15. 23. Ezekiel 24:15–24, and commentaries on vv. 21–22. 24. Ezekiel 24:1–2. 25. Ezekiel 33:21 and Radak ad loc. 26. See Talmud, Tractate Bava Batra 14b: “The book of Ezekiel begins with destruction and concludes with consolation.” 27. Ezekiel 28:25–26. 28. As related in I Kings chs. 11–12. 29. According to many of the commentaries (Rashi, Radak citing his father, Metzudat David, Malbim), the two branches actually fused together miraculously. 30. Ezekiel 37:15–28. 31. Ezekiel 37:1–14. In a striking display, the last sentence quoted here is inscribed at the exit from Yad Vashem, on a veranda overlooking the Judean hills. 32. Talmud, Sanhedrin 92b. See there for various opinions regarding the identity of the corpses. 33. Ezekiel, chs. 40ff. 34. Ezekiel 43:10–11. See Radak ad loc. 35. Midrash Tanchuma, Tzav 14. See at length Likkutei Sichot, vol. 18, pp. 411ff. 36. See Likkutei Sichot ibid., p. 420. 37. Talmud, Menachot 45a. 38. Examples are in the Talmud ibid. and Kiddushin 78b. 39. Rabbi Yosei and Rav Ashi in Talmud, Menachot ibid.; Mishneh Torah, Hil. Maaseh Hakorbanot 2:14–15. 40. Radak and Malbim, Ezekiel 44:17ff. 41. See Radak, Ezekiel 43:19. 42. II Kings 25:27–30. 43. R. Gedaliah ibn Yachya, Shalshet Hakabbalah (Jerusalem 5722 (1962), p. 42). 44. R. Benjamin of Tudela, Masaot Rabbi Binyamin (London 5667 (1907), Hebrew section, pp. 43–44). 45. Talmud, Chagigah 13b. 46. Likkutei Sichot vol. 33, pp. 18ff.

3. יחזקאל כד

"א וַיְהִי דְבַר-יְהוָה אֵלַי בַּשָּׁנָה הַתְּשִׁיעִית, בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָעֲשִׂירִי, בְּעֶשְׂרֵי לַחֹדֶשׁ, לֵאמֹר... טו וַיְהִי דְבַר-יְהוָה, אֵלַי לֵאמֹר. טז בֶּן-אָדָם, הֲגִיב לִקְחֵי מִמֶּךָ אֶת-מַחְמַד עֵינֶיךָ בְּמַגָּפָה; וְלֹא תִסְפֹּד וְלֹא תִבְכֶּה, וְלֹא תִבֹּא דַמְעָתֶךָ. יז הֲאֵנֶק דָּם, מֵיָמִים אֲכָל לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה--פָּאֲרָךְ חֲבוּשׁ עָלֶיךָ, וְנִעְלִיךְ תְּשִׂים בְּרַגְלֶיךָ; וְלֹא תַעֲטֶה עַל-שִׁפְם, וְלִחְם אֲנָשִׁים לֹא תֹאכַל. יח וְאָדַבְרָ אֶל-הָעָם בְּבִקְרָה, וְתַמְתָּ אִשְׁתִּי בְּעָרְבִי; וְאֶעֱשֶׂה בְּבִקְרָה, כְּאִשְׁרֵי צִוִּיתִי. יט וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלַי, הָעָם: הֲלֹא-תִגִּיד לָנוּ מֵה-אֲלֵה לָנוּ, כִּי אַתָּה עֹשֶׂה. כ וַאֲמַר, אֵלַיהֶם: דְּבַר-יְהוָה--הֲיֵה אֵלַי, לֵאמֹר. כא אָמַר לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל, כֹּה-אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה, הֲגִיב מִחֲלָל אֶת-מִקְדָּשִׁי גָאוֹן עֲזָבְכֶם, מִחְמַד עֵינֵיכֶם וּמְחַמֵּל נַפְשְׁכֶם; וּבְנִיכֶם וּבְנוֹתֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר עֲזַבְתֶּם, בְּחָרֵב יִפְלוּ. כב וְעִשִׂיתֶם, כְּאִשְׁרֵי עִשִׂיתִי: עַל-שִׁפְם לֹא תַעֲטוּ, וְלִחְם אֲנָשִׁים לֹא תֹאכְלוּ. כג וּפָאֲרַכֶם עַל-רִאשֵׁיכֶם, וְנִעְלִיכֶם בְּרַגְלֵיכֶם--לֹא תִסְפְּדוּ, וְלֹא תִבְכוּ; וְנִמְקַתֶּם, בְּעֹנוּתֵיכֶם, וְנִהְמַתֶּם, אִישׁ אֶל-אָחִיו. כד וְהֵיךְ יִחְזַקְאֵל לְכֶם לְמוֹפֶת, כָּל אֲשֶׁר-עֹשֶׂה תַעֲשׂוּ: בְּבוֹאָה--וַיְדַעְתֶּם, כִּי אֲנִי אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה. כה וְאַתָּה בֶּן-אָדָם--הֲלוֹא בְּיָוֵם קִחְתִּי מֵהֶם אֶת-מַעֲוָזָם, מִשּׁוֹשׁ תִּפְאָרְתָם: אֶת-מִחְמַד עֵינֵיהֶם וְאֶת-מִשְׂא נַפְשָׁם, בְּנִיהֶם וּבְנוֹתֵיהֶם. כו בְּיָוֵם הַהוּא, יְבֹא הַפְּלִיט אֵלֶיךָ, לְהַשְׁמֵעוֹת, אֲזַנִּים. כז בְּיָוֵם הַהוּא, יִפְתַּח פִּיךָ אֶת-הַפְּלִיט, וְתִדְבַר, וְלֹא תֵאלֵם עוֹד; וְהֵייתָ לָהֶם לְמוֹפֶת, וַיְדַעוּ כִּי-אֲנִי יְהוָה."

1. In the ninth year, on the tenth day of the tenth month, the word of the LORD came to me:....15 The word of the LORD came to me: 16 O mortal, I am about to take away the delight of your eyes from you through pestilence; but you shall not lament or weep or let your tears flow. 17 Moan softly; observe no mourning for the dead: Put on your turban and put your sandals on your feet; do not cover over your upper lip, and do not eat the bread of comforters." 18 In the evening my wife died, and in the morning I did as I had been commanded. And when I spoke to the people that morning, 19 the people asked me, "Will you not tell us what these things portend for us, that you are acting so?" 20 I answered them, "The word of the LORD has come to



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me: 21 Tell the House of Israel: Thus said the Lord GOD: 'I am going to desecrate My Sanctuary, your pride and glory, the delight of your eyes and the desire of your heart; and the sons and daughters you have left behind shall fall by the sword. 22 And Ezekiel shall become a portent for you: you shall do just as he has done, when it happens; and you shall know that I am the Lord GOD.' 23 Accordingly, you shall do as I have done: you shall not cover over your upper lips or eat the bread of comforters; 24 and your turbans shall remain on your heads, and your sandals upon your feet. You shall not lament or weep, but you shall be heartsick because of your iniquities and shall moan to one another." 25 You, O mortal, take note: On the day that I take their stronghold from them, their pride and joy, the delight of their eyes and the longing of their hearts—their sons and daughters— 26 on that day a fugitive will come to you, to let you hear it with your own ears. 27 On that day your mouth shall be opened to the fugitive, and you shall speak and no longer be dumb. So you shall be a portent for them, and they shall know that I am the LORD.

4. **בראשית ה כד:** " וַיִּתְהַלֵּךְ חֲנוּךְ, אֶת-הַאֱלֹהִים; וַאֲיַנְנוּ, כִּי-לָקַח אֹתוֹ אֱלֹהִים. " רש"י: " צדיק היה וקל בדעתו לשוב להרשיע, לפיכך מהר הקב"ה וסלקו והמיתו קדם זמנו, וזהו ששנה הכתוב במיתתו לכתב ואיננו בעולם – למלאות שנותיו (בראשית רבה): "

" AND ENOCH WALKED [WITH GOD] — He was a righteous man, but his mind was easily induced) to turn from his righteous ways and to become wicked. The Holy One, blessed be He, therefore took him away quickly and made him die before his full time. This is why Scripture uses a different expression when referring to his death by writing "and he was not", meaning, he was not in the world to complete the number of his years.

כי לקח אותו. לפני זמנו, כמו הנני לקח ממך את מחמד עיניך (יחזקאל כ"ד)
אדרת אליהו: " ביאורו שנעלם מבני אדם ולא ידע ממנו רק ה' וז"ש כי לקח כו':

מלכים ב ב,ג: " וַיֵּצְאוּ בְנֵי-הַנְּבִיאִים אֲשֶׁר-בֵּית-אֵל, אֶל-אֱלִישֶׁעַ, וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו, הִדְעָתָּ כִּי הַיּוֹם יִהְיֶה לָקַח אֶת-אֲדֹנָיְךָ מֵעַל רֵאשֶׁךָ "

5. סנהדרין כב ע"א

וא"ר יוחנן כל אדם שמתה אשתו ראשונה כאילו חרב בהמ"ק בימיו שנאמר ([יחזקאל כד, טז](#)) (בן אדם הנני לוקח ממך את מחמד עיניך במגפה לא תספד ולא תבכה ולא תבוא דמעתך וכתוב) [יחזקאל כד, יח](#) (ואדבר אל העם בבקר ותמת אשתי בערב וכתוב) ([יחזקאל כד, כא](#)) (הנני מחלל את מקדשי גאון עוזכם מחמד עיניכם)

And Rabbi Yoḥanan says: For any man whose first wife dies, it is as if the Temple were destroyed in his days, as it is stated: "Son of man, behold, I take away from you the desire of your eyes with a stroke; yet neither shall you make lamentation nor weep, neither shall your tears run down" ([Ezekiel 24:16](#)). And it is written: "So I spoke to the people in the morning and in the evening my wife died" ([Ezekiel 24:18](#)). And it is written in the continuation of the same passage: "Behold I will profane My Sanctuary, the pride of your power, the desire of your eyes" ([Ezekiel 24:21](#)), illustrating that a man's wife is as precious to him as the Temple is for the entire Jewish nation.

אמר רבי אלכסנדר כל אדם שמתה אשתו בימיו עולם חשך בעדו שנאמר ([איוב יח, ז](#)) (אור חשך באהלו ונרו עליו ידער ר' יוסי בר חנינא אמר פסיעותיו מתקצרות שנאמר) ([איוב יח, ז](#)) (יצרו צעדי אנו רבי אבהו אמר עצתו נופלת שנאמר) ([איוב יח, ז](#)) (ותשליכהו עצתו) Rabbi Alexandri says: For any man whose wife dies in his days, the world is dark for him, as it is stated: "The light shall be dark in his tent and his lamp over him shall be put out" ([Job 18:6](#)), since the word tent is commonly employed as a metonym for a wife. Rabbi Yosei bar Ḥanina says: His steps get shorter, as it is stated: "The steps of his strength shall be constrained" ([Job 18:7](#)). Rabbi Abbahu says: His counsel falls, as it is stated: "And his own counsel shall cast him down" ([Job 18:7](#)).



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6. יחזקאל טז

" ד ומולדותיך, ביום הולדתך אותך לא-כרת שרך, ובמים לא-רחצת, למשעי; והמלם לא המלחת, והחתל לא חתלת. ה. לא-חסה עליך עין, לעשות לך אמת מאלה--לחמלה עליך; ותשליכי אל-פני השדה, בגעל נפשה, ביום, הולדת אתך. ו. ואעבר עליך ואראך, מתבוססת בדמיך; ואמר לך בדמיך חיי, ואמר לך בדמיך חיי. ז. רכבה, כצמח השדה נתייך, ותרבי ותגדלי, ותבאי בעדי עדיים: שדים נכנו ושערה צמח, ואת ערם וערה. ח. ואעבר עליך ואראך, והנה עתך עת דדים, ואפרש כנפי עליך, ואכסה ערותך; ואשבע לך ואבוא בברית אתך, נאם אדני יהוה--ותהי-לי. ט. וארחצך במים, ואשטף דמיך מעליך; ואסכה, בשמן. י. ואלבישך רקמה, ואנעלה תחש; ואחבשה בשש, ואכסה משי. יא. ואעדה, עדי; ואתנה צמידים על-ידיך, ורביד על-גרוך. יב. ואתן נזם, על-אפה, ועגילים, על-אזניך; ועטרת תפארת, בראשך. יג. ותעדי זהב וכסף, ומלבושך ששי (שש) ומשי ורקמה, סלת ודבש ושמן, אכלתי (אכלת); ותיפי במאד מאד, ותצלחי למלוכה. יד. ויצא לך שם בגוים, בפיך: כי כליל הוא, בהדרי אשר-שמת עליך--נאם, אדני יהוה. טו. ותבטחי בפיך, ותזני על-שמה; ותשפכי את-תזנותיך על-כל-עובר, לו-יהי. טז. ותקחי מבגדיך, ותעשי-לך במות טלאות, ותזני, עליהם: לא באות, ולא יהיה. יז. ותקחי כלי תפארתך, מזהבי ומכספי אשר נתתי לך, ותעשי-לך, צלמי זכר; ותזני-בם. יח. ותקחי את-בגדי רקמתך, ותכסים; ושמיני, וקטרתי, נתתי (נתת), לפניך. יט. ולחמי אשר-נתתי לך סלת ושמן ודבש, האכלתיך, ונתתיהו לפניך לריח ניחח, ויהי: נאם, אדני יהוה. כ. ותקחי את-בניך ואת-בנותיך, אשר ילדת לי, ותזבחים להם, לאכול--המעט, מתזנותך (מתזנותיך). כא. ותשחטי, את-בני; ותתנים, בהעביר אותם להם. כב. ואת כל-תועבתיך ותזנותיך, לא זכרתי (זכרת) את-ימי נעוריך--בהיותך עירם וערה, מתבוססת בדמיך היות."

4 As for your birth, when you were born your navel cord was not cut, and you were not bathed in water to smooth you; you were not rubbed with salt, nor were you swaddled. 5 No one pitied you enough to do any one of these things for you out of compassion for you; on the day you were born, you were left lying, rejected, in the open field. 6 When I passed by you and saw you wallowing in your blood, I said to you: "Live in spite of your blood." Yea, I said to you: "Live in spite of your blood." 7 I let you grow like the plants of the field; and you continued to grow up until you attained to womanhood, until your breasts became firm and your hair sprouted. You were still naked and bare 8 when I passed by you [again] and saw that your time for love had arrived. So I spread My robe over you and covered your nakedness, and I entered into a covenant with you by oath—declares the Lord GOD; thus you became Mine. 9 I bathed you in water, and washed the blood off you, and anointed you with oil. 10 I clothed you with embroidered garments, and gave you sandals of dolphin leather to wear, and wound fine linen about your head, and dressed you in silks. 11 I decked you out in finery and put bracelets on your arms and a chain around your neck. 12 I put a ring in your nose, and earrings in your ears, and a splendid crown on your head. 13 You adorned yourself with gold and silver, and your apparel was of fine linen, silk, and embroidery. Your food was choice flour, honey, and oil. You grew more and more beautiful and became fit for royalty. 14 Your beauty won you fame among the nations, for it was perfected through the splendor which I set upon you—declares the Lord GOD. 15 But confident in your beauty and fame, you played the harlot: you lavished your favors on every passerby; they were his. 16 You even took some of your cloths and made yourself tapestried platforms and fornicated on them—not in the future; not in time to come. 17 You took your beautiful things, made of the gold and silver that I had given you, and you made yourself phallic images and fornicated with them. 18 You took your embroidered cloths to cover them; and you set My oil and My incense before them. 19 The food that I had given you—the choice flour, the oil, and the honey, which I had provided for you to eat—you set it before them for a pleasing odor. And so it went—declares the Lord GOD. 20 You even took the sons and daughters that you bore to Me and sacrificed them to those [images] as food—as if your harlotries were not enough, 21 you slaughtered My children and presented them as offerings to them! 22 In all your abominations and harlotries, you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, and lay wallowing in your blood.



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7. סנהדרין כב ע"א

"א"ר אליעזר כל המגרש את אשתו ראשונה אפילו מזבח מוריד עליו דמעות שנאמר) [מלאכי ב. יג](#) (וזאת שנית תעשו כסות דמעיה את מזבח ה' בכי ואנקה מאין עוד פנות אל המנחה ולקחת רצון מידכם וכתוב) [מלאכי ב. יד](#) (ואמרתם על מה על כי ה' העיד בינך ובין אשת נעורייך אשר אתה בגדתה בה והיא חברתך ואשת בריתך"

8. יחזקאל לג, כא - כב

" וְיְהִי בַשָּׁבָעִי עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה, בְּעֶשְׂרֵי בְחֻמְשָׁה לַחֹדֶשׁ--לְגִלְתִּנּוּ; בַּאֲ-אֵלֵי הַפְּלִיט מִירוּשָׁלַם לֵאמֹר, הִפְתָּה הָעִיר . וַיְדַ-יְהוָה הִיְתֵה אֵלַי בְּעָרְבִי, לִפְנֵי בּוֹא הַפְּלִיט, וַיִּפְתַּח אֶת-פִּי, עַד-בּוֹא אֵלַי בַּבֹּקֶר; וַיִּפְתַּח פִּי, וְלֹא נִאֲלַמְתִּי עוֹד ."

In the twelfth year of our exile, on the fifth day of the tenth month, a fugitive came to me from Jerusalem and reported, "The city has fallen." Now the hand of the LORD had come upon me the evening before the fugitive arrived, and He opened my mouth before he came to me in the morning; thus my mouth was opened and I was no longer speechless.

9. יחזקאל כא

" יֵא וְאֵתְה בֶן-אָדָם, הָאֲנֹחִ; בְּשִׁבְרוֹן מִתְנַיִם וּבִמְרִירוֹת, תִּאֲנַח לְעֵינֵיהֶם . יֵב וְהִיָּה כִי-יֹאמְרוּ אֵלַיךָ, עַל-מָה אֵתְה נִאֲנָח; וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל- שְׂמוּעָה כִי-בָאָה וְנִמְסָה כָל-לֵב וְרַפּוּ כָל-יָדַיִם וְכָהֲתָה כָל-רוּחַ, וְכָל-בְּרָפִים תִּלְכְּנָה מִיָּם--הִנֵּה בָאָה וְנִהְיֵתְה, נֹאֵם אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה... יֵז זַעַק וְהִילֵל, בֶּן-אָדָם--כִּי-הִיא הִיְתֵה בְּעַמִּי, הִיא בְּכָל-נְשִׂיאֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל; מִגּוּרֵי אֶל-חֶרֶב הִיוּ אֶת-עַמִּי, לְכֵן סָפַק אֶל-יָרֵךְ . יֵט וְאֵתְה בֶן-אָדָם-- הַנָּבֵא, וְהָרָה כָף אֶל-כָּף .."

And you, O mortal, sigh; with tottering limbs and bitter grief, sigh before their eyes. And when they ask you, "Why do you sigh?" answer, "Because of the tidings that have come." Every heart shall sink and all hands hang nerveless; every spirit shall grow faint and all knees turn to water because of the tidings that have come. It is approaching, it shall come to pass—declares the Lord GOD... Cry and wail, O mortal, for this shall befall My people, this shall befall all the chieftains of Israel: they shall be cast before the sword together with My people; oh, strike the thigh [in grief]. ..Further, O mortal, prophesy, striking hand against hand.