Ezekiel 11

A Heart of Flesh: The Glory Leaves the City

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The men who felt safest were closest to judgment, and the men who felt farthest from God were the ones He promised to meet. Religion, real estate and a good slogan could not protect Jerusalem's leaders. But to scattered, written-off exiles God promises Himself, a new spirit, and a heart of flesh in place of stone.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

EZEKIEL 11 (KJV), MARKED

▲ **Gold** God — His character & actions	**Green** Command / instruction	**Sky** Key repeated word
⚠ **Rose** Sin / warning	★ **Violet** Promise / blessing	**Amber** Time / place / contrast

1 Moreover the spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of the LORD'S house, which looketh eastward: and behold at the door of the gate five and twenty men; among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people.

2 Then said he unto me, Son of man, these are the men that ⚠ devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city:

3 Which say, ⚠ It is not near; let us build houses: ⚠ this city is the caldron, and we be the flesh.

4 Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man.

5 And ▲ the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the LORD; Thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for ▲ I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them.

6 ⚠ Ye have multiplied your slain in this city, and ye have filled the streets thereof with the slain.

7 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Your slain whom ye have laid in the midst of it, they are the flesh, and this city is the caldron: but I will bring you forth out of the midst of it.

8 Ye have feared the sword; and I will bring a sword upon you, saith the Lord GOD.

9 And I will bring you out of the midst thereof, and deliver you into the hands of strangers, and will execute judgments among you.

10 Ye shall fall by the sword; I will judge you in the border of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

11 This city shall not be your caldron, neither shall ye be the flesh in the midst thereof; but I will judge you in the border of Israel:

12 And ye shall know that I am the LORD: for ⚠ ye have not walked in my statutes, neither executed my judgments, but have done after the manners of the heathen that are round about you.

13 And it came to pass, when I prophesied, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then fell I down upon my face, and cried with a loud voice, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou make ⚠ a full end of the remnant of Israel?

14 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

15 Son of man, thy brethren, even thy brethren, the men of thy kindred, and all the house of Israel wholly, are they unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, ⚠ Get you far from the LORD: unto us is this land given in possession.

16 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as ★ a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come.

17 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; ★ I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and ★ I will give you the land of Israel.

18 And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence.

19 And ★ I will give them one heart, and ★ I will put a new spirit within you; and ★ I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:

20 That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and ★ they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

21 But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord GOD.

22 Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above.

23 And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.

24 Afterwards the spirit took me up, and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the captivity. So the vision that I had seen went up from me.

25 Then I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that the LORD had shewed me.

Marked in the text

- **v1** the east gate of the LORD'S house
- **v1** five and twenty men
- **v2** devise mischief, and give wicked counsel
- **v3** It is not near; let us build houses
- **v3** this city is the caldron, and we be the flesh
- **v5** the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me
- **v5** I know the things that come into your mind
- **v6** Ye have multiplied your slain in this city
- **v10** ye shall know that I am the LORD *(every occurrence)*
- **v12** ye have not walked in my statutes
- **v13** Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died
- **v13** a full end of the remnant of Israel
- **v15** Get you far from the LORD
- **v16** a little sanctuary
- **v17** I will even gather you from the people
- **v17** I will give you the land of Israel
- **v18** detestable things *(every occurrence)*
- **v19** I will give them one heart
- **v19** I will put a new spirit within you
- **v19** I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh
- **v20** That they may walk in my statutes
- **v20** they shall be my people, and I will be their God
- **v23** the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city
- **v23** the mountain which is on the east side of the city

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 11:19 (KJV)

19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:

Setting

This is the last part of the temple vision that began in chapter 8 (dated about September 592 BC, 8:1). Ezekiel is in Babylon with the exiles taken in 597 BC along with King Jehoiachin; Zedekiah rules what is left of Judah. In Jerusalem, the people who were not deported have decided they are the favored ones and the exiles are the castoffs. Jeremiah was telling the same city the opposite: the good figs were the

exiles, the bad figs were those left behind (Jer 24). Chapter 11 answers both groups — judgment for the proud in Jerusalem, a new heart for the scattered exiles — and ends with the glory leaving the city.

Structure

- vv1–4 — **the twenty-five men:** at "the east gate of the LORD's house which faced eastward" stand "twenty-five men," among them "Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah, leaders of the people" (v1). "These are the men who devise iniquity and give evil advice in this city" (v2). Their slogan: "The time is not near to build houses. This city is the pot and we are the flesh" (v3). "Therefore, prophesy against them, son of man, prophesy!" (v4).
- vv5–12 — **the proverb turned against them:** "Then the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me" (v5). God says, "for I know your thoughts" (v5). "You have multiplied your slain in this city" (v6). The slain are the real flesh; the leaders will be brought out (v7). "You have feared a sword; so I will bring a sword upon you" (v8). "You will fall by the sword" at the border of Israel (v10). "Thus you will know that I am the LORD; for you have not walked in My statutes nor have you executed My ordinances" (v12).
- v13 — **Pelatiah dies:** as Ezekiel prophesies, "Pelatiah son of Benaiah died." Ezekiel falls on his face: "Alas, Lord GOD! Will You bring the remnant of Israel to a complete end?" (v13).
- vv14–21 — **hope for the exiles:** Jerusalem's residents tell the exiles, "Go far from the LORD; this land has been given us as a possession" (v15). God answers: "yet I was a sanctuary for them a little while in the countries where they had gone" (v16). "I will gather you from the peoples … and I will give you the land of Israel" (v17). They will remove "all its detestable things and all its abominations" (v18). "And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh" (v19), "that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them" (v20). "Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God" (v20). But for those whose hearts go after their idols, "I will bring their conduct down on their heads" (v21).
- vv22–25 — **the glory leaves the city:** the cherubim lift their wings (v22). "The glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood over the mountain which is east of the city" (v23). The Spirit brings Ezekiel "in a vision by the Spirit of God to the exiles in Chaldea" (v24). "Then I told the exiles all the things that the LORD had shown me" (v25).

Repeated words

city (vv2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 23); pot (vv3, 7, 11); flesh (vv3, 7, 11, 19); sword (vv8, 10); "you will know that I am the LORD" (vv10, 12); statutes / ordinances (vv12, 20); detestable things / abominations (vv18, 21); heart (vv19, 21); Thus says the Lord GOD (vv7, 16, 17); exiles (vv15, 24, 25).

Contrasts

"This city is the pot and we are the flesh" (v3) ⟷ "This city will not be a pot for you" (v11). The leaders' security inside the walls ⟷ the sword they feared coming for them (v8). Jerusalem's claim, "Go far from the LORD" (v15) ⟷ God Himself a sanctuary to those far away (v16). A heart of stone ⟷ a heart of flesh (v19). Ordinances of the nations (v12) ⟷ "My statutes" kept from a new heart (v20). The glory in the midst of the city ⟷ the glory on the mountain to the east (v23).

Chapter theme (my words)

The men who felt safest were closest to judgment, and the men who felt farthest from God were the ones He promised to meet. Religion, real estate and a good slogan could not protect Jerusalem's leaders. But to scattered, written-off exiles God promises Himself, a new spirit, and a heart of flesh in place of stone.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 11:5 (KJV)

5 And ▲ the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the LORD; Thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for ▲ I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them.

The twenty-five leaders (vv1–4)

These are not the twenty-five sun-worshipers of 8:16, who stood inside at the altar; these are civic leaders at the east gate, the place of public business. Guzik calls them "the wicked leaders of a wicked city." He notes this Jaazaniah has a different father from the one in 8:11, so he is likely a different man. Their saying in v3 is hard to translate. Guzik: "It seems better to regard the time is not near to build houses as a question, not a statement" — in effect, "Isn't it time to build houses?" — a boast that life is going on as usual and Babylon is no threat. Taylor, in Guzik, sees house-building as a picture of peaceful activity. The pot image means: Jerusalem's walls protect us like an iron pot protects the choice meat inside. They despised the exiles as scraps thrown out.

God reads their thoughts (vv5–12)

"I know your thoughts" (v5). God answers the proverb on their own terms. The only "flesh" safely in the pot is the people they killed — their slain fill the streets (vv6–7) through violence and injustice. As for the leaders, they will be dragged out of the pot. Guzik: "They wouldn't be protected in the caldron, they would be cooked – and then devoured!" They will be judged at the border of Israel (vv10–11). Trapp, in Guzik, connects this to Riblah, in the far north, where Nebuchadnezzar killed Zedekiah's sons and Judah's officials after the city fell (2 Kgs 25:6–7, 18–21; Jer 52:10, 24–27). Their real crime: they followed the ways of the nations around them rather than God's statutes (v12).

Pelatiah's death (v13)

In the vision, as Ezekiel speaks, Pelatiah falls dead. Feinberg, in Guzik: "His death was a foretaste of what awaited the rest whom Ezekiel had warned." His name is commonly read as "the LORD rescues" or "the LORD preserves a remnant" — which makes his death all the more jarring. Ezekiel does not gloat. He falls on his face and cries out for the remnant (compare 9:8). A true prophet carries a hard message with a broken heart.

"Go far from the LORD" (vv14–16)

The people left in Jerusalem treated the exiles as excommunicated: you are far from the temple, so you are far from God, and the land is ours now. God reverses it. He did scatter them — but "I was a sanctuary for them a little while in the countries where they had gone" (v16). Guzik: "The sense of little is not small, but of short season," and Feinberg agrees it is better read "for a little while." Block, in Guzik: "Here Yahweh promises to be for the exiles what the temple has heretofore been for them in Jerusalem." God was not confined to a building. He was with them by the canals of Babylon.

A new heart (vv17–21)

This is one of the first rays of hope in the book. God promises to gather, to give back the land, and to cleanse it of idols (vv17–18). Then He promises inner change: "one heart," "a new spirit," the heart of stone removed and a heart of flesh given (v19), so they will walk in His statutes (v20). Taylor, in Guzik, notes "one heart" may mean undivided devotion or the reunion of north and south. Guzik ties this to the new covenant of Jer 31:31–34 and to Ezek 36:26–27 and 37, and traces God's covenants from Abraham, Sinai and David to their completion in the New Covenant and the reign of the Messiah.

Christians read the fulfillment differently:

- **A future for national Israel** — many hold that God will literally regather Israel to the land and give the nation a new heart at Christ's return (Rom 11:26–27).
- **Fulfilled in the church** — others see the promise fulfilled in all who are born again by the Spirit, Jew and Gentile together (2 Cor 3:3; Heb 8:8–13).
- **Both** — the new heart is given now to every believer through Christ, with a fuller fulfillment for Israel still to come.

Guzik's page here links the promise to Israel's regathering and the Messiah's reign but does not settle the church question. What all agree on: a new heart is God's work, not man's reform project. And it is not universal — those whose hearts go after their idols will receive their own conduct on their heads (v21).

The glory on the mountain (vv22–23)

The glory, already at the east gate (10:19), rises from the city and stands on the mountain to the east — the Mount of Olives. Guzik: "We can imagine this as a pause to regret and sorrow over the departure." Compare Jesus weeping over Jerusalem from that same hill (Luke 19:41). Taylor, in Guzik, suggests the glory waited, perhaps in case of repentance, and observes, "No further movement is described." Jesus later ascended from the Mount of Olives, and the angels promised He would come back the same way (Acts 1:11–12; Zech 14:4); the glory's return through the east gate comes in Ezek 43:1–5.

Back to Babylon (vv24–25)

The vision lifts. Ezekiel is back among the exiles and tells them everything. The vision of chapters 8–11 was not for Jerusalem's leaders, who would never hear it, but for the exiles — so they would stop envying Jerusalem and start trusting God.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **devise — *chashab* (H2803):** to plan, plot, think up.
- **iniquity — *aven* (H205):** trouble, wickedness, empty evil.
- **pot — *sir* (H5518):** a cooking pot, cauldron.
- **flesh — *basar* (H1320):** meat, body, human flesh.
- **sword — *chereb* (H2719):** sword, the instrument of war and judgment.
- **Pelatiah — *Pelatyah* (H6410):** "the LORD has delivered."
- **remnant — *sheerith* (H7611):** what is left over, the survivors.
- **sanctuary — *miqdash* (H4720):** a holy place, sanctuary.
- **little — *meat* (H4592):** a little, a short while.
- **gather — *qabats* (H6908):** to gather, assemble.
- **detestable things — *shiqquts* (H8251):** disgusting things, idols.

- **abominations — *toebah* (H8441):** something abhorrent, especially idolatry.
- **heart — *leb* (H3820):** the inner person, mind, will.
- **new — *chadash* (H2319):** new, fresh.
- **spirit — *ruach* (H7307):** wind, breath, spirit.
- **stone — *eben* (H68):** stone.
- **statutes — *chuqqah* (H2708):** an engraved, fixed decree.

Cross-references

Deut 30:6; 2 Kgs 25:6–7; 2 Kgs 25:18–21; Ps 51:10; Jer 24:1–10; Jer 29:4–14; Jer 31:31–34; Ezek 8:16; Ezek 9:8; Ezek 18:31; Ezek 36:24–28; Ezek 43:1–5; Zech 14:4; Luke 19:41–44; John 3:3–8; Acts 1:9–12; 2 Cor 3:3; 2 Cor 5:17; Heb 8:8–13.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 11:17 (KJV)

17 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; ★ I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and ★ I will give you the land of Israel.

Command to obey — walk in His statutes

The new heart has a purpose: "that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them" (v20). God changes the heart so the feet follow. I won't treat grace as a substitute for obedience; it's the power for it.

Sin to confess — the false security of the pot

The leaders thought the walls would save them. I've had my own "pot" — a bank account, a reputation, a good track record — that I trusted more than God. Men in recovery know the line, "I've got this," and where it leads. I'll confess my walls and come out where God can reach me.

Warning to heed — despising the scattered

Jerusalem's people looked down on the exiles: "Go far from the LORD" (v15). The church can do that to the man with a record, the addict, the one who failed publicly. God took the exiles' side. If I look down on the men behind the walls or fresh out, I'm standing with Jaazaniah and Pelatiah, not with God.

Promise to trust — a heart of flesh

"I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh" (v19). I can't carve a new heart out of my own will. God does it. For the man whose heart has gone hard from years of using, hurting or being hurt — numb, cold, unable to cry or to care — this is the promise: God replaces stone with flesh. And for the man in a cell who feels far from every church, God says He will be a sanctuary for him right where he is (v16).

Example to follow — Ezekiel on his face

When judgment fell, Ezekiel didn't say, "They deserved it." He fell on his face and pleaded for the remnant (v13). I want to carry hard truth with a soft heart, and pray for the men I warn.

Worship

Lord GOD, You know every thought. You are a sanctuary in a far country. You make stone hearts into living ones, and You gather what was scattered. Your glory lingered over the city, unwilling to leave without one more look.

Prayer

Father, take out the stone in me — the places I've gone hard toward You and toward people — and give me a heart of flesh. Be a sanctuary to the men I serve who feel far from You, in prisons, rehabs and empty rooms. Keep me from trusting walls, and teach me to walk in Your statutes from a new heart. Amen.