EZEKIEL 6

The Mountains of Israel: A Remnant Remembers

> *"Then those of you who escape will remember Me among the nations to which they will be carried captive, how I have been hurt by their adulterous hearts which turned away from Me, and by their eyes which played the harlot after their idols."*
> EZEKIEL 6:9

Where Ezekiel has brought us

1. Chapters 4–5 aimed at the city of Jerusalem.

2. This chapter also introduces the phrase Ezekiel will repeat for the rest of his ministry: “you will know that I am the LORD” (v7).

Prophesy to the Mountains

Ezekiel sets his face against the hills, ravines and valleys of the land.

EZEKIEL 6:2

"Son of man, set your face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them

DAVID GUZIK

Block, in Guzik, says the word for high places could mean 'any open cultic installation, regardless of location,' though 'hilltops often served as sites on which cultic rituals were performed.'

WHAT IT MEANS

God tells Ezekiel to "set your face toward the mountains of Israel" (v2). These were God's mountains, the land He gave His people.

high places (בָּמָה)
BAMAH · "HIGH PLACE"

Bamah means an elevated place, and in Israel's history it became the word for a hilltop shrine. These were leftovers from Canaanite religion, the Baal and Asherah worship Israel never fully removed (1 Kgs 14:23; 2 Kgs 17:9–11).

The Land Turned Against Its Idols



God speaks to the mountains, hills, ravines and valleys, and what Israel built there becomes the place of judgment (6:3–6, 13).

Bones Before the Idols

The worshipers will lie dead in front of the gods they served.

EZEKIEL 6:4

"So your altars will become desolate and your incense altars will be smashed; and I will make your slain fall in front of your idols.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik notes that God's punishment fits the crime. The people loved their altars; their corpses would lie in front of them.

WHAT IT MEANS

Here is the bitter irony of idolatry. The people gave their love and their offerings to the altars on the hills.

idols (גִּלּוּל)
GILLUL · "IDOLS, THINGS ROLLED"

Gillul is Ezekiel's favorite word for idols, used again and again in this book. It literally means things rolled, and it is a contemptuous word.

The Remnant Remembers

In exile, survivors remember the God whose heart they broke.

EZEKIEL 6:8

"However, I will leave a remnant, for you will have those who escaped the sword among the nations when you are scattered among the countries.

DAVID GUZIK

Poole, in Guzik, says the survivors 'shall consider and return, and seek me in their affliction.' What they remember is striking: God's own hurt.

WHAT IT MEANS

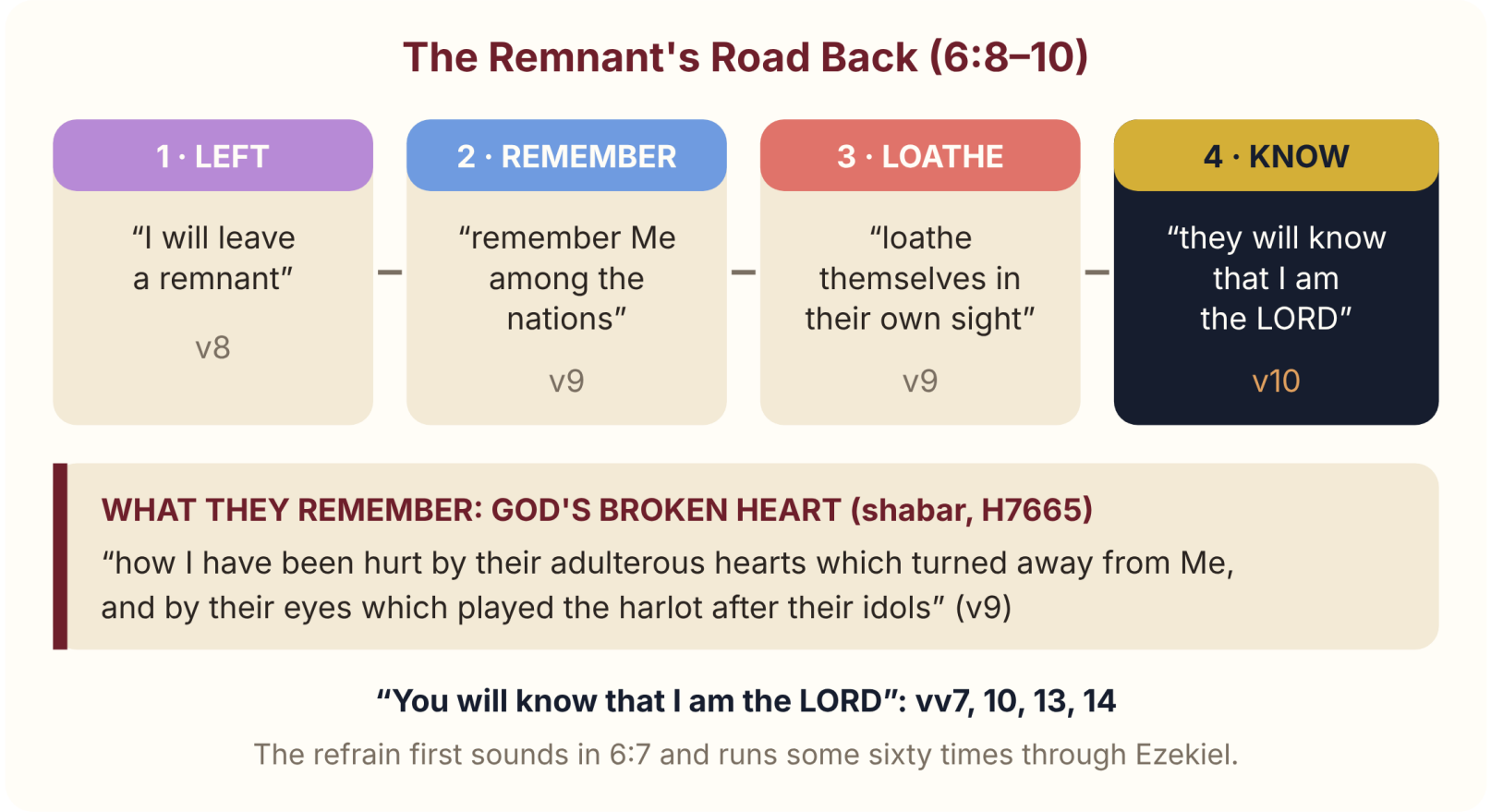
This is where the light breaks through. "However, I will leave a remnant" (v8).

hurt (שָׁבַר)

SHABAR · "BREAK, SHATTER"

Shabar means to break, shatter, crush. In verse 9 God says the remnant will remember "how I have been hurt by their adulterous hearts."

The Remnant's Road Back



Left alive, the survivors remember, loathe their sin and come to know the LORD; behind it all is God's broken heart (6:8–10).

Clap, Stamp and Know

A lament over the whole land, from the wilderness to Diblah.

EZEKIEL 6:13

"Then you will know that I am the LORD, when their slain are among their idols around their altars, on every high hill, on all the tops of the mountains, under every green tree and under every leafy oak—the places where they offered soothing aroma to all their idols.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik notes that "Diblah" is otherwise unknown. Some manuscripts read 'Riblah,' and Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik, explain the difference as a scribal mix-up of the letters d and r, which look alike in Hebrew.

WHAT IT MEANS

God tells Ezekiel to make a scene: "Clap your hand, stamp your foot and say, 'Alas'" (v11). Some read it as scorn at the sin, most as grief and alarm.

desolate (שָׁמֵם)
SHAMEM · "DESOLATE, APPALLED"

Shamem means to be desolate, and also to be appalled, as when people stare at ruins in shock.

What to carry from this chapter

1

Preaching to the hills.

God addresses the landscape itself because the whole land had become a map of idolatry.

2

High places kept coming back.

Josiah tore them down, but after his death the hilltop shrines returned.

3

Dung-gods.

Gillulim, Ezekiel's favorite word for idols, sounds like the word for dung, a deliberate insult.

4

The punishment fits the crime.

The people loved their altars; their bodies would lie in front of them.

More to carry

5

The signature phrase begins.

“You will know that I am the LORD” appears here first and some sixty times in the book.

6

God's heart can be broken.

Shabar means broken; idolatry wounds God like adultery wounds a faithful husband.

7

Regret versus repentance.

The remnant loathes the sin itself, not just its consequences.

8

Desert to Diblah.

Possibly Riblah, the phrase sweeps the land from south to north, like ‘from Dan to Beersheba.’

Talk it through

1. Why do you think God addresses the mountains, hills, ravines and valleys instead of the people directly?

2. The worshipers die in front of their own idols. What does that say about what idols can and cannot do for us?

3. What do the survivors remember in exile, and why does that lead to real repentance rather than just regret?

4. Josiah tore down the high places, and they came back after him. What does it take to keep an idol down once it is torn down?

5. The refrain “you will know that I am the LORD” appears four times. How has God used hard seasons to show you who He is?

CLOSING

The idols on every hill could not save the men who worshiped them. But God kept a remnant, and in a foreign land they remembered Him and saw the heart they had broken. Whatever has replaced God in your life will stand useless on the day you need help; He is the LORD, and He still calls His people home.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

O·I·A study, slides and reflection journal: see the Ezekiel study page.