

Ezekiel 11:1–25 – God Exposes False Confidence and Promises a New Heart

1. Ezekiel Carried to the East Gate – Corrupt Counsel Exposed

Ezekiel is still physically in Babylon, but in a vision the Spirit of God takes him back to Jerusalem.

“Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the East Gate of the Lord’s house, which faces eastward; and there at the door of the gate were twenty-five men, among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people.” (Ezekiel 11:1, NKJV)

These are leaders—“princes of the people.” They are shaping public opinion, setting the tone for the nation. But instead of calling people to humble repentance and trust in the Lord, they are feeding them lies.

“...These are the men who devise iniquity and give wicked counsel in this city, who say, ‘The time is not near to build houses; this city is the caldron, and we are the meat.’”
(Ezekiel 11:2–3, NKJV)

Their picture is this:

- *“We’re safe in Jerusalem. We’re protected like meat in a pot. Judgment won’t reach us here.”*

They are urging the people to ignore God’s warnings and to rely on the walls of the city instead of the word of the Lord. Jeremiah in Jerusalem and Ezekiel in Babylon have both been saying the opposite:

- Surrender to Babylon, because God is using this judgment to discipline His people.
- Stop listening to false promises of quick victory and easy escape.

The leaders, however, encourage rebellion—and their “courage” is not faith, but pride.

2. God Knows Every Thought

In the middle of this vision, God speaks directly:

“Then the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and said to me, ‘Speak! Thus says the Lord: ‘Thus you have said, O house of Israel; for I know the things that come into your mind.’”
(Ezekiel 11:5, NKJV)

That is a searching statement:

“I know the things that come into your mind.”

God is not fooled by public speeches, religious language, or spiritual appearance. He sees motives, fears, schemes, and secret ambitions. The people might say, “The Lord does not see,” but He does.

The Lord lays out His charge:

“You have multiplied your slain in this city, and you have filled its streets with the slain.” (Ezekiel 11:6, NKJV)

Their wicked counsel—urging resistance when God had clearly said judgment was coming—has led to death. People who might have been spared if they listened to God’s word are now perishing because they listened to flattering lies.

So God turns their proverb upside down:

“Your slain whom you have laid in its midst, they are the meat, and this city is the caldron; but I shall bring you out of the midst of it.” (Ezekiel 11:7, NKJV)

Those already dead are the only ones “protected” from what is coming. The leaders who thought they were safe inside the “pot” of Jerusalem will be dragged out and judged.

God even gives a specific detail:

“You shall fall by the sword. I will judge you at the border of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.” (Ezekiel 11:10, NKJV)

This was fulfilled historically when the leaders were captured and judged at the northern border. The point is clear: God’s word is precise, and His justice is not vague.

While Ezekiel is still prophesying, one of these leaders—Pelatiah—dies in the vision:

“Now it happened, while I was prophesying, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then I fell on my face and cried with a loud voice, and said, ‘Ah, Lord God! Will You make a complete end of the remnant of Israel?’” (Ezekiel 11:13, NKJV)

Ezekiel is deeply shaken. He feels the weight of judgment and fears there may be no one left.

3. God as a Sanctuary in Exile

God answers Ezekiel’s cry with words of both correction and comfort.

The people still in Jerusalem were saying to the exiles in Babylon:

“Get far away from the Lord; this land has been given to us as a possession.” (See Ezekiel 11:15)

In other words:

“You exiles are the ones rejected by God. We’re the ones who stayed in the land. We’re the real Israel.”

But God turns that thinking around:

“Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord God: ‘Although I have cast them far off among the Gentiles, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet I shall be a little sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone.’” (Ezekiel 11:16, NKJV)

This is beautiful. God says to the exiles:

- You are far from the temple,
- Far from Jerusalem,
- Far from the place you once associated with My presence—

But I Myself will be your sanctuary where you are.

Even in judgment, God is near to those who seek Him. He does not abandon those whose hearts are turned toward Him, even when circumstances are painful and confusing.

4. A Promise of Restoration and a New Heart

God then looks beyond the present judgment and speaks of future restoration:

“Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord God: ‘I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.’” (Ezekiel 11:17)

He promises a regathering and, more importantly, a deep inner change:

“Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.”
(Ezekiel 11:19–20, NKJV)

This is more than just coming back to the land. It is God changing the core of who they are:

- From divided to united – “one heart.”
- From stubborn to responsive – “a new spirit within.”
- From hard-hearted to tender-hearted – “a heart of flesh.”

This finds its fullest expression in the new covenant, fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Through His death and resurrection, He pours out the Holy Spirit, who writes God’s law on our hearts and changes us from the inside out.

Those who refuse this inner work remain exposed:

“But as for those whose hearts follow the desire for their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their deeds on their own heads,” says the Lord God.
(Ezekiel 11:21, NKJV)

5. The Glory Departs to the Mount of Olives

The vision then returns to the movement of God’s glory.

“So the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel was high above them. And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain, which is on the east side of the city.” (Ezekiel 11:22–23, NKJV)

That mountain on the east side of Jerusalem is the Mount of Olives. The glory that once filled the temple has now moved outside the city. This is a solemn picture of God withdrawing His manifest presence from a people who would not listen.

Later in history, Jesus Himself—God in the flesh—would stand, teach, pray, weep, and ascend from that same mountain. His coming and His saving work bring the presence of God back to His people

in a deeper and more personal way than the temple ever could. Through His shed blood on the cross, He made atonement for our sins. Through His resurrection, He declared Himself to be God, Savior, and Lord.

The vision ends:

“Afterwards the Spirit took me up and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to those in captivity. And the vision that I had seen went up from me. So I spoke to those in captivity of all the things the Lord had shown me.” (Ezekiel 11:24–25, NKJV)

Ezekiel returns to Babylon and faithfully shares what God has revealed.

Practical Application

1. **God sees the counsel we listen to—and the counsel we give.**

The leaders in Jerusalem used their influence to lead people away from God’s word. Today, voices around us and within us can do the same—encouraging self-confidence instead of trust in the Lord, compromise instead of obedience.

2. **God knows every thought.**

We cannot hide behind public appearances or religious habits. God knows “the things that come into your mind.” This is not meant to crush us, but to call us to honesty. There is no healing where there is hiding.

3. **God Himself is our sanctuary.**

Even in exile, even in loss, even far from what feels familiar or safe, God says, “I will be a little sanctuary for you.” If you belong to Him, you are never truly alone.

4. **Only God can give a new heart.**

The root problem is not just behavior—it is the heart. We do not need minor adjustments; we need inner transformation. God promises a new heart and a new spirit, and that promise finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

A Challenge for Believers

- Whose counsel are you following—the popular voices of the culture, or the clear voice of God in Scripture?
- Have you begun to lean on your own “walls”—your plans, resources, or traditions—instead of trusting the Lord?
- Is your heart tender toward God, or has it become hard, cynical, or divided?

Ask yourself honestly:

“Am I living by God’s statutes, or have I quietly adopted the patterns and values of the world around me?”

Pray:

“Lord, You see every thought and every motive. I do not want to deceive myself. Give me a single heart for You. Take what is hard in me and make it soft. Put a new spirit within me so that I delight to walk in Your ways.”

An Invitation to Non-Believers

Ezekiel 11 shows both the seriousness of judgment and the depth of God’s mercy. He exposes false confidence, warns of real consequences, and yet promises a new heart and a new spirit.

All of us, in one way or another, have turned from God. Our sin separates us from Him. But God did not leave us there.

Jesus Christ came, lived a sinless life, and willingly went to the cross. He shed His blood to save us, taking the judgment we deserve. When He rose from the dead, His resurrection declared that He is God, Savior, and Lord.

He not only offers forgiveness—He offers a new heart, a new spirit, a new life.

If you have never given your life to Jesus, you can turn to Him today. You may speak to Him in your own words, or you may pray something like this:

“Lord Jesus, I know that I have sinned and that I cannot save myself. I believe that You shed Your blood on the cross to save me, and that You rose again as God, my Savior, and my Lord. Please forgive me, cleanse me, and give me a new heart. I surrender my life to You. Help me to follow You from this day forward.”

If you turn to Him sincerely, He will not reject you.

He will forgive you completely.

He will be your sanctuary—now and forever.