

The sermon notes [start here](#).

The formula:

Ezekiel 6:7

The slain shall fall in your midst; then you shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 6:10

And they shall know that I am the Lord; I did not threaten in vain to bring this disaster upon them.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 6:13

And you shall know that I am the Lord, when their slain lie among their idols around their altars, on every high hill, on all the mountain tops, under every green tree, and under every leafy oak, wherever they offered pleasing odor to all their idols.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 6:14

I will stretch out my hand against them, and make the land desolate and waste, throughout all their settlements, from the wilderness to Riblah. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 7:4

My eye will not spare you, I will have no pity. I will punish you for your ways, while your abominations are among you. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 7:27

The king shall mourn, the prince shall be wrapped in despair, and the hands of the people of the land shall tremble. According to their way I will deal with them; according to their own judgments I will judge them. And they shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 11:10

You shall fall by the sword; I will judge you at the border of Israel. And you

shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 11:12

Then you shall know that I am the Lord, whose statutes you have not followed, and whose ordinances you have not kept, but you have acted according to the ordinances of the nations that are around you.”

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 12:15

And they shall know that I am the Lord, when I disperse them among the nations and scatter them through the countries.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 12:16

But I will let a few of them escape from the sword, from famine and pestilence, so that they may tell of all their abominations among the nations where they go; then they shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 12:20

The inhabited cities shall be laid waste, and the land shall become a desolation; and you shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 13:9

My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and utter lying divinations; they shall not be in the council of my people, nor be enrolled in the register of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter the land of Israel; and you shall know that I am the Lord God.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 13:14

I will break down the wall that you have smeared with whitewash, and bring it to the ground, so that its foundation will be laid bare; when it falls, you shall perish within it; and you shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 13:21

I will tear off your veils, and save my people from your hands; they shall no

longer be prey in your hands; and you shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 14:8

I will set my face against them; I will make them a sign and a byword and cut them off from the midst of my people; and you shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 15:7

I will set my face against them; although they escape from the fire, the fire shall still consume them; and you shall know that I am the Lord, when I set my face against them.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 16:62

I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the Lord,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 17:24

All the trees of the field shall know that I am the Lord. I bring low the high tree, I make high the low tree; I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish. I the Lord have spoken; I will accomplish it.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 20:38

I will purge out the rebels among you, and those who transgress against me; I will bring them out of the land where they reside as aliens, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 20:42

You shall know that I am the Lord, when I bring you into the land of Israel, the country that I swore to give to your ancestors.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 20:44

And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I deal with you for my name's sake, not according to your evil ways, or corrupt deeds, O house of Israel, says the Lord God.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 22:16

And I shall be profaned through you in the sight of the nations; and you shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 23:49

They shall repay you for your lewdness, and you shall bear the penalty for your sinful idolatry; and you shall know that I am the Lord God.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 24:24

Thus Ezekiel shall be a sign to you; you shall do just as he has done. When this comes, then you shall know that I am the Lord God.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 24:27

On that day your mouth shall be opened to the one who has escaped, and you shall speak and no longer be silent. So you shall be a sign to them; and they shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 25:5

I will make Rabbah a pasture for camels and Ammon a fold for flocks. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 25:7

therefore I have stretched out my hand against you, and will hand you over as plunder to the nations. I will cut you off from the peoples and will make you perish out of the countries; I will destroy you. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 25:11

and I will execute judgments upon Moab. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 25:17

I will execute great vengeance on them with wrathful punishments. Then they

shall know that I am the Lord, when I lay my vengeance on them.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 26:6

and its daughter-towns in the country shall be killed by the sword. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 28:22

and say, Thus says the Lord God: I am against you, O Sidon, and I will gain glory in your midst. They shall know that I am the Lord when I execute judgments in it, and manifest my holiness in it;

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 28:23

for I will send pestilence into it, and bloodshed into its streets; and the dead shall fall in its midst, by the sword that is against it on every side. And they shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 28:24

The house of Israel shall no longer find a pricking brier or a piercing thorn among all their neighbors who have treated them with contempt. And they shall know that I am the Lord God.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 28:26

They shall live in safety in it, and shall build houses and plant vineyards. They shall live in safety, when I execute judgments upon all their neighbors who have treated them with contempt. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 29:6

Then all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the Lord because you were a staff of reed to the house of Israel;

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 29:9

and the land of Egypt shall be a desolation and a waste. Then they shall know

that I am the Lord. Because you said, “The Nile is mine, and I made it,”

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 29:16

The Egyptians shall never again be the reliance of the house of Israel; they will recall their iniquity, when they turned to them for aid. Then they shall know that I am the Lord God.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 29:21

On that day I will cause a horn to sprout up for the house of Israel, and I will open your lips among them. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 30:8

Then they shall know that I am the Lord, when I have set fire to Egypt, and all who help it are broken.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 30:19

Thus I will execute acts of judgment on Egypt. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 30:25

I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh shall fall. And they shall know that I am the Lord, when I put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon. He shall stretch it out against the land of Egypt,

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 30:26

and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 32:15

When I make the land of Egypt desolate and when the land is stripped of all that fills it, when I strike down all who live in it, then they shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 33:29

Then they shall know that I am the Lord, when I have made the land a desolation and a waste because of all their abominations that they have committed.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 34:27

The trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase. They shall be secure on their soil; and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I break the bars of their yoke, and save them from the hands of those who enslaved them.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 35:4

I lay your towns in ruins; you shall become a desolation, and you shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 35:9

I will make you a perpetual desolation, and your cities shall never be inhabited. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 35:15

As you rejoiced over the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so I will deal with you; you shall be desolate, Mount Seir, and all Edom, all of it. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 36:11

and I will multiply human beings and animals upon you. They shall increase and be fruitful; and I will cause you to be inhabited as in your former times, and will do more good to you than ever before. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 36:23

I will sanctify my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord, says the Lord God, when through you I display my holiness

before their eyes.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 36:38

Like the flock for sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed festivals, so shall the ruined towns be filled with flocks of people. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 37:6

I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.”

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 37:13

And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 38:23

So I will display my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 39:6

I will send fire on Magog and on those who live securely in the coastlands; and they shall know that I am the Lord.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 39:7

My holy name I will make known among my people Israel; and I will not let my holy name be profaned any more; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 39:22

The house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God, from that day forward.

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Ezekiel 39:28

Then they shall know that I am the Lord their God because I sent them into exile among the nations, and then gathered them into their own land. I will leave none of them behind;

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

[Back to the top.](#)

Sermon title: **"Then they shall know that I am the LORD" (Ezekiel 34:26-28).**

Good morning. As I warned last week, I'm sticking with the prophet Ezekiel again today. For reasons I'll explain later, I'm not going to apply Ezekiel's teachings to Hurricane Ida, to the pandemic, or to Afghanistan, but I have to acknowledge that these things are still on my mind, and still at the center of many of our prayers.

[SLIDE 1] I will make them [the Israelites] and the region around my hill a blessing; and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. The trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase. They shall be secure on their soil; and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I break the bars of their yoke, and save them from the hands of those who enslaved them.

[SLIDE 2] They shall no more be plunder for the nations, nor shall the animals of the land devour them; they shall live in safety, and no one shall make them afraid.

My first title for this sermon was: "Don't say I didn't warn you." Here's why: my own personal controversy with Ezekiel is his constant use of this so-called "acknowledgment formula": "Then they (or you) shall know that I am the LORD."

[SLIDE 3]

The specific instance that's linked to the title of my sermon, Ezekiel 34:26-28, comes from the happy ending of Ezekiel 34, the chapter I dealt with last week. After dethroning the corrupt shepherds and warning the bullies and polluters among the sheep, Ezekiel reports that God has taken over directly, and will put David on the throne to represent God.

But this is one of the relatively few times Ezekiel uses this phrase in a happy context.

For example, in Chapter 6, Ezekiel uses it *four times*, in his indictment of Israel and his warning of what their punishment will be like. For example:

[SLIDE 4] Verse 10: And they shall know that I am the Lord; I did not threaten in vain to bring this disaster upon them.. Verses 14 and 15, I will stretch out my hand against them, and make the land desolate and waste, throughout all their settlements, from the wilderness to Riblah.[b] Then they shall know that I am the Lord.

It would be too depressing to list all of the times this formula is repeated, but as you can see, **[SLIDE 5]** I've made a start. Here are the 58 times he repeats it. (If anyone

would like to see the details, I can send you a list with hyperlinks to the biblical texts.)

Of those 58 times, **[SLIDE 6]** I'd count ten of them as good news, relating to God's promise to restore Israel as in Chapter 34. The other 48 basically say, "I'm going to rain destruction down on you -- then you'll really know who I am."

And of course it's not just Israel who is threatened with this fate, as in chapter 6. For one specific example, one of Ezekiel's pet grievances is that the rump leadership of Judah under Babylonian occupation is conniving with Egypt to create a coalition against Babylon, despite God's orders to the Israelites to cooperate with their conquerors. In chapters 29 through 33, Ezekiel pronounces savage judgments against Egypt, not just for its conspiracies with Judah's plotters, but for its arrogance.

Maybe you can understand my discomfort with the way Ezekiel portrays God. It's almost as if Ezekiel is like an angry mom from a 1950's TV show, saying to the naughty child, "Just wait until your daddy gets home -- he'll show you what's what." Is this what our Creator, who loved us into being, is really like?

Some of you may remember me speaking last January on Noah's ark. One thing I didn't mention was the biggest discomfort I have with *that* story: the wiping out of countless innocents. It's also the reason I can't sing "Pharaoh's army got drowned, O Mary don't you weep." It's a theme that I call "God's collateral damage," the apparent suffering among innocent people and animals seemingly caused by God's mighty acts. There seem to be three ways out. Which way do you prefer?

1. These people's sufferings were inconsequential to God in comparison to the value of teaching the rest of God's audience a lesson.
2. These events did not happen exactly as they're prophesied or depicted in the Bible; in reality, while many innocent people suffered and died in biblical history, no innocent people suffered just for the sake of shock and awe.
3. God's biblical chroniclers did not understand God well enough at that point in history to record God's provisions of care to those whose death appears cruel to us. Along with the Creator we know and love, there's a residue of the tribal God, the warrior God of the Israelites, whose prominence seems to vary dramatically from one biblical writer to another. What's really interesting to me is that the biblical editors, both at the time, and in the centuries when the Bible was being put together by church committees, did not think this variety should be concealed from us, and trusted that the Holy Spirit would help us discern what we need to know about God's character.

If you were here last Sunday, you heard me call Ezekiel, the priest-prophet of Israel's Babylonian exile, a political scientist. At the time of his prophecies, the air was certainly thick with politics. Just a quick review of the context: Around four centuries before Ezekiel, the last king of the complete nation of Israel, King Solomon, started out his reign with lots of promise, but then began to allow the spiritual influences of other religions into Israel, and things went rapidly downhill from there.

According to the biblical record, when Solomon died, most of Israel rejected the rule of his successors, leaving those successors to rule a much smaller nation, Judah. Much of the political history of both parts, Israel and Judah, concerns their wars with each other and with neighbors, some of whom eventually conquer and take over both Israel and, eventually, Judah. The job of the prophets is very political: to address those events, including the cycles of corruption and reform, directly in the name of God.

In general, the prophets were not writing for the convenience of future preachers. Joseph Blenkinsopp's wonderful Interpretation commentary on Ezekiel warns us: 'It is important to bear in mind that the prophet, unlike the mystic, is addressing a quite specific historical situation, generally a situation of crisis. To approach a prophetic book with the idea that it will impart "timeless truths" is to risk serious misunderstanding.' Nevertheless, I'm going to risk it.

The biblical prophets focus mostly on three themes: first, the worship of God and the need to keep God at the center, no matter what. Often this theme is linked with their personal stories of how God commissioned them as prophets. Second, they point to corruption and its consequences, no matter whose ox is gored. The third theme: what will happen to Israel's neighbors as a result of their cruel treatment of the Hebrew people.

Ezekiel hit all of those themes hard, addressing very specific situations both before and after the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 586 BC. To risk extracting "timeless truths" from all of this passionate prophecy, here's what I propose for us today:

Ezekiel wants you to know that God can be worshipped even in exile, even when you don't have a temple to resort to. No matter what crisis we might be facing -- hurricanes, pandemics, blowback in our nation's foreign adventures -- God wants to be among us in our worship.

Second, Ezekiel wants you to know that God will not be mocked. It's an equal opportunity warning: God will not be mocked neither by our friends and allies, nor by our so-called enemies. What constitutes mocking God in our own time? Here are a couple of ways, but you might think of more... Christians mock God when we use manipulative God-language to fulfill our own agendas, in effect committing the one unforgivable sin: attributing to the Holy Spirit our own sinful intentions or prejudices. Then there's the most popular violation of the Ten Commandments in our politicized and polarized times: bearing false witness. God knows the truth, and will not be mocked.

Finally, Ezekiel wants us to know that God will, one way or another, keep God's promises. Drawing on Second Corinthians 1:20, here's another way to put it: Jesus is the "yes" to all of God's promises. Discerning how to express those promises to our community and our world today, and what our role is as the body of Christ in fulfilling them, might be Ezekiel's charge to us Quakers.

[Slide 7 -- queries]

1. What has God promised us/the world that I particularly feel drawn to express?
2. What promise particularly expresses who we are as Spokane Friends?
3. What might be my (our) gifts and roles in fulfilling these promises?

Then they shall know who God is!

[To the beginning of the sermon](#)

[To the top of the page](#)

Reminder: Jeremiah 23:30-32

The Message

30-31 "I've had it with the 'prophets' who get all their sermons secondhand from each other. Yes, I've had it with them. They make up stuff and then pretend it's a real sermon.

32 "Oh yes, I've had it with the prophets who preach the lies they dream up, spreading them all over the country, ruining the lives of my people with their cheap and reckless lies.

"I never sent these prophets, never authorized a single one of them. They do nothing for this people—*nothing!*" God's Decree.