



JUNE 2026 | DAY 21

ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

With Fellowship of the Rockies

SCRIPTURE

Jeremiah 51
Jeremiah 52
Psalms 136

For most of the book of Jeremiah, Babylon was on top of the world. The great empire crushed nation after nation under its feet on a climb to global domination. Drunk on their own power, the Babylonians even reached for the heavens—the Hebrew word *shamayim*, which, as you’ll learn in the video, refers not only to the skies, but also to the divine realm beyond them.

It’s not the first time we’ve seen a towering Babylon defy God’s authority. By hyperlinking the audacity of Nebuchadnezzar’s empire to humanity’s rebellion in Genesis 11 (at the tower of “Babel”), Jeremiah presents Babylon as an archetype of all arrogant nations who gain wealth and power with violence rather than trusting and following Yahweh. But now, Jeremiah announces that the cosmic waters of de-creation will consume Babylon. He adds a dramatic flourish to his final words by writing Babylon’s fate on a scroll and having it thrown into a river, where the raging waters swallow it whole.

The final chapter of the book vindicates Jeremiah’s message by reporting, in excruciating detail, how all the prophet’s warnings of judgment ultimately came to pass. Still, the story ends with a small glimmer of hope.

In the very last paragraph of Jeremiah, one of David’s descendants is released from prison and eats at the king’s table in Babylon. Despite Israel’s heart-wrenching spiral into rebellion and ruin, Yahweh has not abandoned his people or the promise of a future king from David’s line. Israel faces a long, dark night of exile—but dawn will eventually break.



JUNE 2026 | DAY 22

ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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SCRIPTURE

Ezekiel 1
Ezekiel 2
Ezekiel 3
Psalms 137

The book of Ezekiel opens with one of the most depressing birthday parties of all time. Ezekiel is one of the exiled people of Israel. On the day he turns 30, he sits on the bank of an irrigation canal. To say that Ezekiel's had a rough year would be an understatement.

Ezekiel was supposed to be ordained as a priest in Jerusalem during that year, which means he would have been serving Yahweh in the golden splendor of Jerusalem's great temple. Instead, he's serving the Babylonian empire as a political prisoner in a refugee camp. Ezekiel has no idea whether he'll ever see his home again.

Then Ezekiel's birthday takes a wild turn. The sky fills with fire and lightning, brightness and burning. Wheels spin within wheels, eyes blinking from their rims. At the center of it all is a glowing throne-chariot contraption, held up by hybrid human-animal creatures with four faces. Brace yourself: The story only gets stranger from there. Watch the video to learn about the bizarre and hopeful book of the Hebrew Bible's third major prophet, Ezekiel.



JUNE 2026 | DAY 23

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SCRIPTURE

Ezekiel 4
Ezekiel 5
Ezekiel 6
Ezekiel 7
Psalms 138

Yahweh's prophets had a tough job. They didn't get to clock in, write a few poems, make some announcements about the end of the world, and then go home to chill at the end of the day. Prophesying for Yahweh was a whole-life kind of calling.

Isaiah walked around stark naked for three years. Jeremiah spent much of his 20-year prophetic career in prison, in tears, or both. But none of Yahweh's prophets had a more unsavory job than Ezekiel.

Today's reading introduces us to Ezekiel's sign acts. These public stunts served as in-person, tangible parables illustrating his prophetic message. Some are relatively tame. Ezekiel builds a scale model of Jerusalem and hacks off much of his hair. But Yahweh also tells Ezekiel to lie on his side for more than a year, eating food cooked over flaming piles of human waste. Why?

When people see Ezekiel doing this in the middle of his Jerusalem model, they see a sobering picture of the desperation to come. Soon, Jerusalem will fall under siege, fuel and food sources will run dry, and total desperation will set in.

Ezekiel's fellow refugees gawk at his humiliating and horrifying attempts to get their attention, but the message never takes root. As they have turned from Yahweh, they turn from his prophet to choose a different way.

Ezekiel has to wonder: If the people ignore feces-fired food, how will Yahweh ever get their attention?



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ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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SCRIPTURE

Ezekiel 8
Ezekiel 9
Ezekiel 10
Ezekiel 11
Psalms 139

In today's reading, Yahweh gives Ezekiel access to divine security camera footage of his temple. Nothing it reveals looks good. The Israelites in Jerusalem are trashing Yahweh's house.

They set up an idol statue on the front porch and vandalized the walls with idolatrous graffiti. Women commandeered the side door to worship a Babylonian fertility god named Tammuz. Men converted the entryway into a celestial shrine, literally turning their backs toward Yahweh's presence to worship the sun instead.

As usual, idolatry drives people to treat one another with greed, violence, and injustice. The people of Judah show contempt for Yahweh's image-bearers, as they do for Yahweh's sacred home. They cook up vile corruption in Yahweh's kitchen and splatter innocent blood all over his living room carpet. The whole place reeks.

So Yahweh sends a divine cleaning crew to wash Jerusalem clean with a flood of de-creation. Yahweh undoes the evil humanity builds. Unwilling to bear the revolting stench of Israel's injustice and idolatry, Yahweh packs up the glory and goodness of his presence and moves out. As Ezekiel watches from afar, the God-mobile leaves its parking spot over the ark of the covenant before driving away.



JUNE 2026 | DAY 24 - CONTINUED

ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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SCRIPTURE

Ezekiel 8
Ezekiel 9
Ezekiel 10
Ezekiel 11
Psalms 139

Pay attention to the visceral imagery here. The contaminating filth of the people's corruption will eventually grow so vile that the land itself will vomit them out of Judah and into exile. But, as always, Yahweh's warning of severe judgment comes with a promise of hope. On his birthday, Ezekiel saw the mysterious God-mobile come to rest with his exiled people in Babylon. Through everything, God wants to be with his people, and he will be.



JUNE 2026 | DAY 25

ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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SCRIPTURE

Ezekiel 12
Ezekiel 13
Ezekiel 14
Psalms 140

So far, Ezekiel has proven willing to do anything God instructs to get the Israelites' attention. When societies embrace unjust practices over time, cruel evils become normal. In today's reading, Ezekiel speaks against these "norms" with creative rhetorical devices from his prophetic toolbox. He'll do this to expose the corruption of Israel's leaders, and to warn them about the consequences of their decisions.

For the Southern Kingdom's puppet ruler, Ezekiel uses street theatre. The prophet packs his bags and carries his luggage down the road as a dramatic symbol of Zedekiah's fate: exile, for both the king and his remaining subjects in Jerusalem.

For the false prophets promising peace to the exiles, Ezekiel uses metaphor. These sweet-talking teachers tell sunny lies to the exiles in Yahweh's name, but their message is like a slapdash paint job on a crumbling wall. When Yahweh's fierce judgment comes, their tower of tall tales will topple.

And for the idolatrous elders of Israel, Ezekiel uses hypotheticals. He argues that if the most righteous mediators in history—Noah, Daniel, and Job—intervened before God, even their prayers wouldn't convince Yahweh to turn his severe judgment away from Israel.

Ezekiel warns these corrupt religious leaders that their idol-worship leads to iniquity—the Hebrew word 'avon, which can refer to both crooked behavior and its consequences. Watch the video to learn more about the meaning of the word iniquity in the Bible and God's gracious response to it.



JUNE 2026 | DAY 26

ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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SCRIPTURE

Ezekiel 15
Ezekiel 16
Ezekiel 17
Psalms 141

Stories have a unique power to convey truth, especially when truth is uncomfortable and hard to face directly. In today's reading, Ezekiel uses three stories to confront the Israelites with the brutal truth about their covenant unfaithfulness.

In the outer pair of narratives, Ezekiel describes Israel's rebellious remnant as a scorched and shriveled vine. Yahweh planted his people in fertile soil where they could thrive and produce fruit. But the leaders and people have rejected Yahweh's life-giving wisdom, causing them to wither into a useless, barren stalk.

A long allegorical story sits between the outer pair of stories. It compares Israel to an unfaithful spouse. A word of caution: Some of the language Ezekiel uses here is graphic and disturbing. Two important notes about this passage can help us understand Ezekiel's challenging message.

First, Ezekiel's portrayal of Jerusalem is a grotesque caricature, intentionally exaggerated for shock value. Nobody would act the way Jerusalem does in Ezekiel's allegory. (Sex workers don't generally pay their clients.) Ezekiel is trying to jolt the elders of Israel into recognizing the disastrous results of their unfaithfulness. So he twists the familiar metaphor of Israel's covenant marriage with Yahweh into the most appalling nightmare he can imagine.

Remember, Ezekiel is disrupting his audience in a way that eating dung bread and lying on his side for nearly 400 days did not manage to do. This allegory should be horrifying to read. That's Ezekiel's whole point.



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SCRIPTURE

Ezekiel 15
Ezekiel 16
Ezekiel 17
Psalms 141

Second, it's important to pay close attention to how Yahweh's judgment works in Ezekiel's allegory. Yahweh responds to Jerusalem's adultery by giving the city what it wants: to strip itself of Yahweh's protection and give itself into the hands of other nations. Ezekiel uses intense imagery to deliver the same essential points made by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and even Moses long before.

If the Israelites want to hook up with other gods, Yahweh won't stop them. But he certainly wants them to avoid that decision and everything that happens after it. So Yahweh cranks up his volume through the prophets to deliver extreme warnings, helping them see what they're in for before they get there.



JUNE 2026 | DAY 27

ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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SCRIPTURE

Ezekiel 18
Ezekiel 19
Ezekiel 20
Psalms 142

What might a caged lion and a drooping grapevine share in common? For Ezekiel, both symbolize the collapse of Judah's royal line.

In Genesis 49, we read about Judah's original royal blessing. We heard God referring to Judah as a "lion's cub" (v. 9). That blessing was going to be amazing, but not now. Ezekiel laments for Israel's rulers, inverting the imagery from that royal blessing to envision a fierce lion falling into a net, being caged, and led to Babylon. He repeats this idea with imagery of a strong, fruitful vine that is uprooted and shrivels in the scorching east wind.

Similar to the structure we saw in yesterday's reading, the author arranged today's passage in a three-part symmetry. Ezekiel's lament poem receives emphasis by being placed at the center, between a pair of passages that focus on Israel's generational sin and exile. It's almost like the structure shows readers how, in the middle of all this sin and darkness, Ezekiel laments with poetic detail about the catastrophic corruption of something once beautiful.

Ezekiel also disputes one of the exiles' favorite sayings, a proverb claiming that children suffer the consequences of their parents' sin. The sullen Israelites had been quoting this proverb to blame their suffering on previous generations: If it hadn't been for King Manasseh and his child sacrifices, we wouldn't be in exile. It's our ancestors' fault.



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SCRIPTURE

Ezekiel 18
Ezekiel 19
Ezekiel 20
Psalms 142

Yahweh disagrees. This generation is suffering from its own choices. On one hand, this is a harsh reality check. On the other hand, a bit of good news. If Yahweh is holding them accountable for what their ancestors did, there is nothing more they can do. The decisions of others trap them. But if Yahweh judges each generation based on its own actions, these Israelites may still return to God and live.

Yahweh urges the Israelites to turn away from their transgressions, using the Hebrew word pesha. This is about relational betrayal. To “transgress” is to relate wrongly with others or God. It’s a common word in the Hebrew Bible because, as Ezekiel argues, the people have long suffered from their pattern of breaking relationship with God. Watch the video to learn more about the meaning of pesha (transgression) in the Bible.