

and has lots of symbols. But many of his prophecies have both beauty and ^{imagery} horror: the dirges of ch.19, the picture of Tyre as a ship in Ch.27, prophecies concerning shepherds in Ch. 34, and the section in Ch. 37, about the dry bones coming to life again -- which a negro spiritual has made so famous.

4. The central idea of Ezekiel is that of God as spiritual, powerful, but especially as holy. The Hebrew people, or nation, have profaned God and are therefore punished by defeat of the nation and exile of the leaders. However, when they repent they will be restored, not necessarily as a nation but as a people who love God. Their restoration will convince other peoples that their God truly is holy and powerful, and must be the only God.

5. But the greatest contribution of Ezekiel to religious thought is individualism. Earlier prophets were concerned with the nation only as a unit. The destruction of the state raised a new problem. A restored state could be formed only of cleansed individuals. So in chapter 18, ~~and~~ Scripture, Ezekiel insists that the individual has a standing before God. He is not condemned because he is a descendent of guilty ancestors, as the old Jewish law proclaimed. And he can even be redeemed

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