

Pentwater Bible Church

Book of Ezekiel

Message 10

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Ezekiel by James Tissot Cir. 1882

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God Judges The Idolaters

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GOD JUDGES ISRAEL

EZEKIEL 5:13-6:7

¹³Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my wrath toward them to rest, and I shall be comforted; and they shall know that I, Jehovah, have spoken in my zeal, when I have accomplished my wrath upon them. ¹⁴Moreover I will make thee a desolation and a reproach among the nations that are round about thee, in the sight of all that pass by. ¹⁵So it shall be a reproach and a taunt, an instruction and an astonishment, unto the nations that are round about thee, when I shall execute judgments on thee in anger and in wrath, and in wrathful rebukes; (I, Jehovah, have spoken it); ¹⁶when I shall send upon them the evil arrows of famine, that are for destruction, which I will send to destroy you. And I will increase the famine upon you, and will break your staff of bread; ¹⁷and I will send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee: I, Jehovah, have spoken it.

¹ And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, ²Son of man, set thy face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy unto them, ³and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord Jehovah: Thus saith the Lord Jehovah to the mountains and to the hills, to the watercourses and to the valleys: Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places. ⁴And your altars shall become desolate, and your sun-images shall be broken; and I will cast down your slain men before your idols. ⁵And I will lay the dead bodies of the children of Israel before their idols; and I will scatter your bones round about your altars. ⁶In all your dwelling-places the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate; that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your sun-images may be hewn down, and your works may be abolished. ⁷And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall know that I am Jehovah.

⁸Yet will I leave a remnant, in that ye shall have some that escape the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the countries. ⁹And those of you that escape shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captive, how that I have been broken with their lewd heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which play the harlot after their idols: and they shall loathe themselves in their own sight for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations. ¹⁰And they shall know that I am Jehovah: I have not said in vain that I would do this evil unto them (ASV, 1901).

GOD SATISFIES HIS ANGER

EZEKIEL 5:13

¹³Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my wrath toward them to rest, and I shall be comforted; and they shall know that I, Jehovah, have spoken in my zeal, when I have accomplished my wrath upon them (ASV, 1901).

God says that He will bring the exercise of His judgment upon Jerusalem, the nation's capital city. This judgment would be done with the display of the judgment showing to the surrounding nations. His special favor had been given to the southern Kingdom and now His special wrath. He says that when His anger has been completed He will experience comfort that His anger has been satisfied. This discussion focuses on the ancient Israelites but is a warning to the nations around them for He says; "*and they shall know that I, Jehovah, have spoken in my zeal, when I have accomplished my wrath upon them.*" The central lesson here is when any nation, which violates the holiness of God and pursues immoral activities can expect to receive judgment. God's honor will always be vindicated. He will only tolerate sin for so long before He brings judgment on a nation. Israel violated the clear law of God in self-pursuit of immoral activities. They violated the moral order of the world of which they had special revelation. The New Testament affirms this moral order and accountability.

Romans 1:18-23

¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hinder the truth in unrighteousness; ¹⁹because that which is known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them. ²⁰For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse: ²¹because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. ²²Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, ²³and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things (ASV, 1901).

EZEKIEL 5:14-15

¹⁴Moreover I will make thee a desolation and a reproach among the nations that are round about thee, in the sight of all that pass by. ¹⁵So it shall be a reproach and a taunt, an instruction and an astonishment, unto the nations that are round about thee, when I shall execute judgments on thee in anger and in wrath, and in wrathful rebukes; (I, Jehovah, have spoken it) (ASV, 1901)

God is declaring His action will result in a severe disapproval from the surrounding nations. After Israel had touted their special relationship with the genuine God of the universe, now the nations would view them with disdain and disappointment. The nations

will be astonished to see what happened to a nation that had so much and now they will receive taunting admonitions. This would result in Israel's humiliation to their neighbors. The nations in their ridicule to Israel would see the horror and know that this too could happen to them.

GOD AFFIRMS THE TYPE OF DESTRUCTION COMING

EZEKIEL 5:16-17

¹⁶when I shall send upon them the evil arrows of famine, that are for destruction, which I will send to destroy you. And I will increase the famine upon you, and will break your staff of bread; ¹⁷and I will send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee: I, Jehovah, have spoken it (ASV, 1901).

God here characterizes the destructive arrows as coming from Himself. God's arrows of judgment include famine, the Babylonians swords, and the plague of wild beasts to attack them. Israel was known to have lions, vipers, and crocodiles at the time of the Babylonian invasion. God will cause all of them to turn on the humans in Israel. God through Moses predicted this type of judgment nearly a thousand years earlier.

Deuteronomy 32:23-25

²³ I will heap evils upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them: ²⁴They shall be wasted with hunger, and devoured with burning heat And bitter destruction; And the teeth of beasts will I send upon them, With the poison of crawling things of the dust. ²⁵Without shall the sword bereave, And in the chambers terror; It shall destroy both young man and virgin, The suckling with the man of gray hairs (ASV, 1901).

The bereavement God speaks of will come when the Jews see their children dying because they don't have the stamina of an adult to endure the famine and the attack of the wild beasts as well as of tertiary wars such as with Pharaoh-Neco (II Kings 23:29) fighting Babylon. Through all of this the Israelites will be affected. This seems to be the meaning of the expression *blood shall pass through thee*. God makes it quite clear that it is Him that has given this dire prediction. He says, "I, Jehovah, have spoken it." This is the fundamental spiritual principal, unless people and nations forsake their sins, they must receive God's retribution of them. God's Word declares this; his holiness validates it, and human experience confirms it. Israel had great privilege and with it came great responsibility. Our nation likewise has great advantages, which involve corresponding obligations, which demand a *moral* government to carry out God's Laws, or we will suffer terrible condemnation.

EZEKIEL SETS HIS FACE TO THE MOUNTAINS

Ezekiel 6:1-2

¹ And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, ²Son of man, set thy face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy unto them (ASV, 1901)

This is a new message from God to Ezekiel regarding Israel's sins focusing on their idolatry, which was the primary cause of Judgment. God is telling Ezekiel to *set thy face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy unto them*. This might seem strange for God to direct His hostility toward the mountains of Israel. The central reason for this is the High Places. God condemns the use of high places as idolatrous—the use of them is usually a rejection of Him and an acceptance of the Canaanite gods. Because the Jews used the high places rather than the temple is a direct cause of both the Assyrian and Babylonian the exiles expressed by the prophets. While the high places were used for the worship of the Canaanite deities, the more common use was to use high places for the worship of the Lord and at the same time the Canaanite gods. This is referred to a syncretic worship that is blending worship to God and the pagan gods. After the temple was built, the ancient Israelites continued to use the high places, which was a rejection of the authority of God. These High Places were where the worship of sexual activity also known as the fertility religion and the worship of Baal (Leviticus 26:30-33; Isaiah 65:7; Jeremiah 3:6, 19:5; 32:35, Hosea 4:13). The Lord and His prophets strongly condemn the practice. The rites practiced at the high places and the cultic objects found there are typically Canaanite: ritual prostitution (1 Kings 14:23-24; Ezekiel 16:16), child sacrifice (Jeremiah 7:31; 19:5; 32:35; Ezekiel 16:20), sacrifices and the burning of incense (1 Kings 22:43; 2 Kings 12:3), the stone pillar symbolizing Baal, and the wooden pole symbolizing the goddess Asherah (1 Kings 14:23; 2 Kings 17:10). Later in this book God will provide a substantive prophecy regarding the restoration of the High Places (Ezekiel 36:1-15).

GOD WILL DESTROY THE HIGH PLACES

Ezekiel 6:3-4

³and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord Jehovah: Thus saith the Lord Jehovah to the mountains and to the hills, to the watercourses and to the valleys: Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places. ⁴And your altars shall become desolate, and your sun-images shall be broken; and I will cast down your slain men before your idols (ASV, 1901).

Hezekiah in the eight century B.C. and Josiah in the seventh century B.C. removed the High Places and restored worship to the Lord. But after they died the people reverted to pagan worship (II Kings 18: 4; 23:5). Virtuous leaders are necessary to cause the people to act in a moral manner. Idolatry spread to all parts of the land of Israel not just the mountains. Even the watercourses were used to worship Molech (Isaiah 57:5; Jeremiah 2:23; 7:31-32). These were channels or canals made for the conveyance of water. The sword that would do this was of the Babylonian General and later King Nebuchadnezzar. He would put an end to the High Places by destroying them. The sun images that Ezekiel references here were obelisk shaped objects to worship the sun (II Chronicles 34:4). Worshipping the sun was an ancient form of idolatry, which was developed by the Egyptians, and consumed a dominant part of their life. The Israelites who died in battle were to be cast down before their idols. This meant a defilement of the idols by the corpses of the Jews. This was one visible way God demonstrated His vengeance on the idols by heaping dead bodies upon them.

GOD CONTINUES TO WARN OF THE IMPENDING DISASTER

Ezekiel 6:5-7

⁵And I will lay the dead bodies of the children of Israel before their idols; and I will scatter your bones round about your altars. ⁶In all your dwelling-places the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate; that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your sun-images may be hewn down, and your works may be abolished. ⁷And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall know that I am Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

The main installations of the high places were *the altars* (Hebrew *meezbachotem*)(Ezekiel 6:4). There sacrifices were offered there (1 Kings 18:30–35). Here God uses the Hebrew word for *incense stands* (Hebrew *chamman*) (Ezekiel 6:4, 6); and the word only occurs in a few other late texts (II Chronicles 34:4). Instead of providing the Israelites some satisfaction through sexual deviancy, corpses lying before Israel's idols will pollute the high places, and *bones* will be scattered about the *altars* (Ezekiel 6:5; II Kings 23:14–16). This prophetic statement was made to Moses, who wrote it hundreds of years before. And now the time for its fulfillment had come. God in His patience had delayed the judgment, but when the time had come He remembered all that Moses recorded from Him and now was executing His own Word. A careful comparison of the passage in Leviticus with verses 3–6 of this chapter shows the literal fulfillment.

Leviticus 26:30-33

³⁰And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your sun-images, and cast your dead bodies upon the bodies of your idols; and my soul shall abhor you. ³¹And I will make your cities a waste, and will bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savor of your sweet odors. ³²And I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies that dwell therein shall be astonished at it. ³³And you will I scatter among the nations, and I will draw out the sword after you: and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste (ASV, 1901).

NOT ALL WILL BE KILLED

Ezekiel 6:8-10

⁸Yet will I leave a remnant, in that ye shall have some that escape the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the countries. ⁹And those of you that escape shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captive, how that I have been broken with their lewd heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which play the harlot after their idols: and they shall loathe themselves in their own sight for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations. ¹⁰And they shall know that I am Jehovah: I have not said in vain that I would do this evil unto them (ASV, 1901).

The Lord in His mercy will allow a remnant to be left alive. They would remember the mercy shown them and also the evil that they did. They would know the extent of the pain they inflicted upon God due to the evil practices that they engaged in. In fact the degree of self-awareness of their sins is characterized as, *and they shall loathe themselves in their own sight for the evils, which they have committed in all their abominations*. No judgment, which came upon the Israelites ever completely, destroyed them as a nation. A remnant always remained and turned to the Lord. During the greatest and longest judgment, which has ever befallen the people Israel, their worldwide dispersion in the present age, there is also a remnant amongst them (Romans 11:5). And when Jehovah God resumes His dealings with them during the last seven years of the Times of the Gentiles, the Tribulation, the time of their greatest trouble, a remnant will turn to Him and be converted. This judgment will be for the entire world. That remnant will be carried through the heavy judgments of the end time and receive the blessings and the glory of the promised kingdom. This will happen right at the end of the Tribulation through a national mourning for rejecting Jesus.

THE NATIONAL MOURNING BEGINS

Zechariah 12:10

¹⁰And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born (ASV 1901).

Then the Lord pours out His “*spirit of grace and of supplication*” which causes the Jews to realize that it was *them* who persecuted Jesus and had Him nailed to the cross at Calvary. The Lord in the first person (“*me*”) begins to describe the mourning process the Jews will go through when they finally realize that it was God himself who died for them as Jesus the Messiah. He uses the analogy of losing a child to express the degree of mourning that will be felt. This degree of mourning is unparalleled in the lives of humans because the loss of a child is one of the greatest pains one can experience. He says not only is it the loss of a child, but it is as if it is the parent’s only male child. Then He further defines the situation as losing a son who is their first-born child. Our first-born children are the ones with whom we learn parenting and spend the most time and effort attending to their care. We usually invest more of ourselves into the first-born child than any other child. A loss of this child will give us an immense amount of pain that will never leave us while we are still on this earth. This is the extent of pain the nation Israel will experience when they finally realize what they have done to their Messiah Jesus.

NEXT MESSAGE: THE END COMES UPON THE LAND

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments

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