

# Pentwater Bible Church

*Book of Ezekiel*

*Message 17*

*December 27, 2015*



The Destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD by David Roberts Cir 1850

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# Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Ezekiel  
Message Seventeen

The Lord Identifies The Ringleaders of the Apostasy  
December 27, 2015  
Daniel E. Woodhead

Ezekiel 11:1-13

<sup>1</sup> Moreover the Spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of Jehovah's house, which looketh eastward: and behold, at the door of the gate five and twenty men; and I saw in the midst of them Jaazaniah the son of Azzur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people. <sup>2</sup> And he said unto me, Son of man, these are the men that devise iniquity, and that give wicked counsel in this city; <sup>3</sup> that say, The time is not near to build houses: this city is the caldron, and we are the flesh. <sup>4</sup> Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man.

<sup>5</sup> And the Spirit of Jehovah fell upon me, and he said unto me, Speak, Thus saith Jehovah: Thus have ye said, O house of Israel; for I know the things that come into your mind. <sup>6</sup> Ye have multiplied your slain in this city, and ye have filled the streets thereof with the slain. <sup>7</sup> Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Your slain whom ye have laid in the midst of it, they are the flesh, and this city is the caldron; but ye shall be brought forth out of the midst of it. <sup>8</sup> Ye have feared the sword; and I will bring the sword upon you, saith the Lord Jehovah. <sup>9</sup> And I will bring you forth out of the midst thereof, and deliver you into the hands of strangers, and will execute judgments among you. <sup>10</sup> Ye shall fall by the sword; I will judge you in the border of Israel; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah. <sup>11</sup> This city shall not be your caldron, neither shall ye be the flesh in the midst thereof; I will judge you in the border of Israel; <sup>12</sup> and ye shall know that I am Jehovah: for ye have not walked in my statutes, neither have ye executed mine ordinances, but have done after the ordinances of the nations that are round about you.

<sup>13</sup> And it came to pass, when I prophesied, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then fell I down upon my face, and cried with a loud voice, and said, Ah Lord Jehovah! wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel (ASV, 1901)?

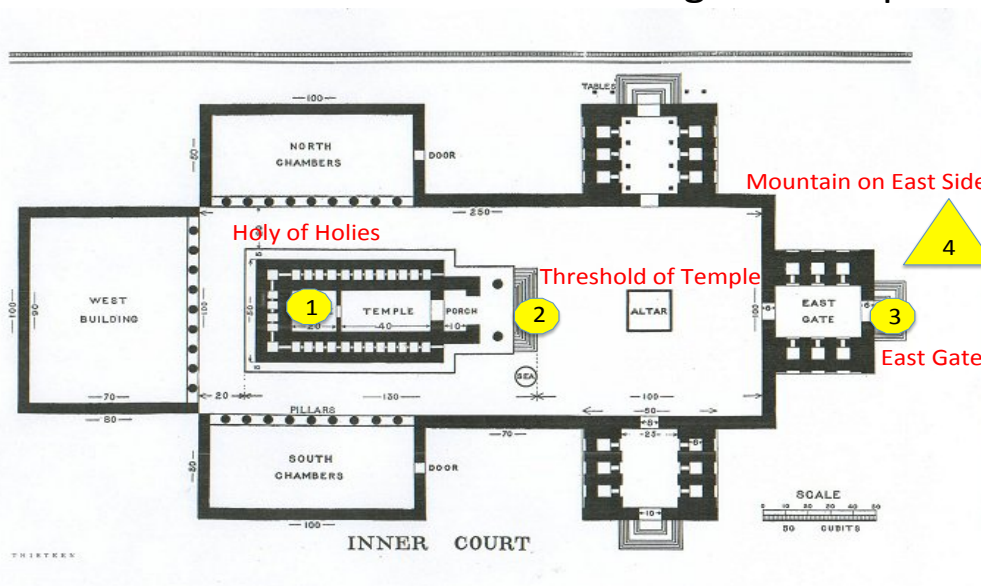
WICKEDNESS IN THE TEMPLE

Ezekiel 11:1-13

<sup>1</sup> Moreover the Spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of Jehovah's house, which looketh eastward: and behold, at the door of the gate five and twenty men; and I saw in the midst of them Jaazaniah the son of Azzur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people (ASV, 1901).

The last movement of the Glory of God, His Shekinah moved Ezekiel from the threshold of the Temple to the eastern gate. Here he was on the outside of the eastern gate facing the valley of Jehoshaphat and the Mount of Olives. Here he again saw the twenty-five men.

## Gradual Movements of God Leaving The Temple



These were the same twenty-five men who were bowing defiantly toward the sun and against God inside between the porch and the altar. Now he sees that they have moved outside the eastern gate facing the sun as it rose at dawn. This idolatrous practice was done here before Josiah's reign using horses, which they dedicated to the sun. During the good king Josiah's reign thirty six years earlier he removed sacred horses dedicated by previous kings furthering the abominational practice of worshipping the sun (II Kings 23:11). God is giving Ezekiel one last view of the terrible defiance the idolaters were displaying against Him before He made His last move out of the Temple area and resting on the Mount of Olives for His temporary earthly residence.

Here the Lord showed him two men who he identified by name. They were influential men of the city of Jerusalem as Ezekiel cites them by name and called them the princes of the people. They were Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah. The city gate was the traditional location where the elders of the city sat to discuss legal matters and to administer justice. It was a standard Mid Eastern place for the leaders of a city or religious group to meet and conduct court so to speak (Genesis 23:10, 18; Deuteronomy 21:19; Joshua 20:4; Ruth 4:1-2, 9, 11; Job 29:7, 14-17). These influential men most likely belonged to the Israeli nobility. Recent archaeological discoveries in the excavations of the city of David have yielded over two hundred and fifty clay seals used on official documents from the period just prior to the fall of Jerusalem. They were preserved because they were burned when the building in which they were housed was destroyed, probably in the destruction of 586 B.C. Both the names Jaazaniah and Pelatiah appeared in this archive of seals of royal officials. In addition to these, the name Jeremiah and the seal

of Jeremiah's scribe, Baruch, the son of Neriah, were found.<sup>1</sup> It is important to notice how God names the major offenders by name. These men will be called out for their evil plotting and giving wicked advice to the people in Jerusalem.

#### GOD CONFIRMS THEIR EVIL

Ezekiel 11:2-4

*<sup>2</sup>And he said unto me, Son of man, these are the men that devise iniquity, and that give wicked counsel in this city; <sup>3</sup>that say, The time is not near to build houses: this city is the caldron, and we are the flesh. <sup>4</sup>Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man (ASV, 1901).*

These leaders were responsible for the general adherence to the spiritual leaders as well of the moral and social direction of the population. The prevalent attitude of the people was derived from these men. It is important to realize what the prophet Jeremiah had said earlier. He spoke out against the false leadership of these men and others who followed them. They branded Jeremiah as a traitor for his prophecies that it was God Who had sent them over to Babylon and they should accept the Babylonian suzerainty. If not He would send the Babylonian army in to destroy Jerusalem. Jeremiah's truth greatly angered the people to the point that his life was in danger. False prophets gave the people hope that the people who were exiled in 605 B.C. and 597 B.C. would soon be returning. King Jehoiachin who was taken in 597 B.C. was in prison was soon to be released and reinstated as king of Judah according to the false prophets. Jeremiah wrote a letter and sent it to the elders in Babylon. It told them that they would be in Babylon for seventy years (Jeremiah 29:4-10). In the letter the statement was made that they should build houses and dwell in them in Babylon because they were going to be there quite a while. The wicked leaders defied God as he spoke through the prophet Jeremiah. They said that the people in Babylon should not build houses there as their release was soon expected. They told the people exactly the opposite of what God was telling them. The Church is commanded to clearly reject apostate messages and disassociate from the people who promulgate them. After carefully evaluating the false doctrine promulgated and following Matthew 18:15-17 we must separate from them. The Lord has commanded it.

1. Separation is not an optional part of Christianity; it is a commandment (Romans 16:17-18; 2 Corinthians 6:14-17; 1 Timothy 6:5; 2 Timothy 2:16-18; 3:5; Titus 3:10; 2 John 7-11; Revelation 18:4).
2. Separation is not mean or unloving; it is obedience to God.
  - a. "Mark them . . . avoid them" (Romans 16:17)
  - b. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with" (2 Corinthians 6:14)
  - c. "Have no fellowship with" (2 Corinthians 6:14)
  - d. "Come out from among" (2 Corinthians 6:17)
  - e. "Withdraw thyself" (1 Timothy 6:5)
  - f. "Shun" (2 Timothy 2:16)
  - g. "Purge oneself from" (2 Timothy 2:21)
  - h. "From such turn away" (2 Timothy 3:5)
  - i. "Reject" (Titus 3:10)

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<sup>1</sup> T. Schneider. (1991). *Six Biblical Signatures* Biblical Archaeology Review, XVII(4), pgs. 26–33.

- j. “Receive them not into your house neither bid them Godspeed” (2 John 10)
3. We are to separate even from brethren who are walking in disobedience (2 Thessalonians 3:6).
  4. Separation is a wall of protection against spiritual danger. Failure to separate from error leaves one open to the influence of error (1 Corinthians 15:33). The reason a shepherd separates the sheep from wolves is to protect them. Likewise, a faithful and godly Bible teacher will seek to separate his flock from spiritual dangers that are even more destructive than wolves. The Doctor of souls will do all he can to keep heresies out of the church. They are to the Church of Jesus Christ what disease is to a Medical Doctor that cares for human bodies in time and space. Both legitimate Doctors will do all they can to prevent or stop heresies/diseases in their respective bodies. Unfortunately there are more quacks in the spiritual realm than in the physical temporal one. This is because the prize for pure spiritual truth is eternal life. It is the greatest prize on earth to receive. Nothing has greater value. As evidence of this we see many false prophets, corrupt denominations and seminary teachings. As a result few find eternal salvation (Matthew 7:13-14). Then Satan has accomplished one of his goals; the eternal destruction of human souls.

The false prophets such as Jaazaniah and Pelatiah also likened Jerusalem to a caldron (boiling pot) with the people being the flesh or meat placed there for cooking. In this illustration they were attempting to convey the cozy sense of security to the people of them being in a warm comforting and protected environment with security. Just as meat is not taken out of the pot until it is fully cooked they would not be forced to leave Jerusalem before the appropriate time at the end of their natural lives. Even though these men knew that God had forsaken Jerusalem (Ezekiel 9:9) and affirmed it by putting their backsides toward the Temple and defecating toward it they still thought they would prevail against Babylon. God ends this exposition of the wicked men to Ezekiel by saying, “*Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man.*” The Lord repeats the command prophecy for emphasis and urgency as He is long suffering and always providing a way out of the impending judgment for them if they change.

#### GOD CALLS EZEKIEL TO EXPOSE THEIR WICKED LIES

Ezekiel 11:5-6

*<sup>5</sup>And the Spirit of Jehovah fell upon me, and he said unto me, Speak, Thus saith Jehovah: Thus have ye said, O house of Israel; for I know the things that come into your mind. <sup>6</sup>Ye have multiplied your slain in this city, and ye have filled the streets thereof with the slain (ASV, 1901).*

As God continues to show Ezekiel the specific wickedness and lies of the leaders of the people He enters deeply into Ezekiel’s spirit to convey specific messages to him regarding how he will approach the people. He first tells him to say, “*I know the things that come into your mind.*” God is omniscient. He knows and sees everything even before we think it. He created us and knows us better than we might realize. The Lord knows our thoughts, whether good or bad, conscious or unconscious, even if we can no longer remember them (Psalms 139:1–6; Daniel 2:30; Acts 1:24). They are like a permanent recording to Him. He wants Ezekiel to confront the Israeli leaders in Babylon about the elders in Jerusalem.

There was regular communication between the two groups. God again draws a specific result to their apostasy and wickedness in promoting a false pagan morality. It leads to unrestrained violence in the streets. This is always the result of low morality.

#### GOD'S VIEW OF THE CALDRON PARABLE

Ezekiel 11:7-12

*<sup>7</sup>Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Your slain whom ye have laid in the midst of it, they are the flesh, and this city is the caldron; but ye shall be brought forth out of the midst of it. <sup>8</sup>Ye have feared the sword; and I will bring the sword upon you, saith the Lord Jehovah <sup>9</sup>And I will bring you forth out of the midst thereof, and deliver you into the hands of strangers, and will execute judgments among you. <sup>10</sup>Ye shall fall by the sword; I will judge you in the border of Israel; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah <sup>11</sup>This city shall not be your caldron, neither shall ye be the flesh in the midst thereof; I will judge you in the border of Israel; <sup>12</sup>and ye shall know that I am Jehovah: for ye have not walked in my statutes, neither have ye executed mine ordinances, but have done after the ordinances of the nations that are round about you (ASV, 1901).*

God takes their parable and reverses it to remove their comfort and present the true nature of the illustration. He says that instead of long life in comfort the dead, which they are responsible for, are the meat in the caldron. The city of Jerusalem will not be a safe haven. It will be a boiling hot caldron burning the flesh to death. The Lord starts with the example of the deaths the false leaders caused. Others who will be killed as the Babylonians enter the city will be additional flesh for the caldron of Jerusalem suffering the fires the Babylonian army under Nebuzaradan, Nebuchadnezzar's captain of the guard set. He further tells them that they have been fearful of being killed by the Babylonian swords but now God will bring them upon them. For the leaders and the king Zedekiah it will not be in the city. They will try and escape (*have feared the sword*), but will be captured (*I will bring the sword upon you*) and put you to death. And so it came true. Nebuchadnezzar received his high-ranking Jewish prisoners on the borders, the territory of the kingdom of Israel, at Riblah (2 Kings 25:18–21; Jer. 52:24–27). God declared that they wanted the paganism of the countries around them more than the moral commands of the one who controls the affairs of the world.

This is all true of the Church Age too. God has spoken. Long ago He has in His Word announced the judgment upon this present age. Religious leaders, who falsely teach among the people, like these twenty-five, reject His Word and don't believe in the impending judgments. "Peace and safety" is their false hope through their own works and desires. But the day is coming and not far off when all who reject the Word of God and carry out corrupt morality will find out, to their eternal shame and loss, that His Word is true.

#### EZEKIEL ASKS IF THE NATION ISRAEL IS FINISHED

Ezekiel 11:13



*<sup>13</sup>And it came to pass, when I prophesied, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then fell I down upon my face, and cried with a loud voice, and said, Ah Lord Jehovah! wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel (ASV, 1901)?*

While Ezekiel was receiving the prophecy from God one of the wicked leaders Pelatiah died in Ezekiel's sight. The caused give Ezekiel a vivid realization that God was going to do exactly as He told him He would do. This is the first casualty of the judgment of God against the ruling Israelites. Ezekiel was concerned that God would wipe out all the Jews thus eliminating them for being the messengers of His Word and the promises to bring God's Messiah to earth. It caused Ezekiel to panic with the full realization that God's Word is true regarding judgment and as the New Testament says:

Hebrews 4:12

*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (KJV).*

The truth of God's Word reaches the innermost being of a person so that it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Because God created us He knows us better than anyone including ourselves. God's Word can discriminate successfully between what is spiritual in man and what is merely worldly or natural (*dividing asunder of soul and spirit*), and does so even when these often-contradictory inner elements are interwoven as closely as joints and marrow. The thought life of a Christian is often a mixture of urges, which are both divinely spiritual and completely human. It takes the supernaturally discernment of God through His Word to sort these out and to expose what is of the flesh. The readers might think that they were contemplating certain steps out of purely spiritual motivations when, as God's Word could show them, they were acting unfaithfully as the men of Ezekiel's time in Babylon and Jerusalem. They had a choice to follow the truth of God's Word or not and so do we.

NEXT MESSAGE: THE RESTORATION OF THE REMNANT TO JERUSALEM

**Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments**

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