

Pentwater Bible Church

Ezekiel Message 66
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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Ezekiel

Message Sixty-Six

THE PROPHECY AGAINST EGYPT PT. V

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Ezekiel 31:10-18

¹⁰Therefore thus said the Lord Jehovah: Because thou art exalted in stature, and he hath set his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height; ¹¹I will even deliver him into the hand of the mighty one of the nations; he shall surely deal with him; I have driven him out for his wickedness. ¹²And strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him: upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the watercourses of the land; and all the peoples of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him. ¹³Upon his ruin all the birds of the heavens shall dwell, and all the beasts of the field shall be upon his branches; ¹⁴to the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves in their stature, neither set their top among the thick boughs, nor that their mighty ones stand up on their height, even all that drink water: for they are all delivered unto death, to the nether parts of the earth, in the midst of the children of men, with them that go down to the pit.

¹⁵Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: In the day when he went down to Sheol I caused a mourning: I covered the deep for him, and I restrained the rivers thereof; and the great waters were stayed; and I caused Lebanon to mourn for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him. ¹⁶I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to Sheol with them that descend into the pit; and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, were comforted in the nether parts of the earth. ¹⁷They also went down into Sheol with him unto them that are slain by the sword; yea, they that were his arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the nations.

¹⁸To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth: thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised, with them that are slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

THE LORD HATES WICKEDNESS

Ezekiel 31:10-11

¹⁰Therefore thus said the Lord Jehovah: Because thou art exalted in stature, and he hath set his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height; ¹¹I will even deliver him into the hand of the mighty one of the nations; he shall surely deal with him; I have driven him out for his wickedness (ASV, 1901).

In this section of Scripture the Lord begins to discuss why He brought in the Babylonians to Assyria. It is a conclusion to the fifth prophecy against Egypt. It was because of their wickedness. Continuing in the illustration of Assyria as a tall cedar tree he says it *set his top among the thick boughs*. As the Lord continues He explains what this means as He describes the Assyrian's *heart is lifted up in his height*. This is a clear reference to pride. God judged the nation because like a cedar it towered on high, lifting its top about the thick foliage, and because it was proud of its height. Pride is so offensive to God because it is an attempt to rob Him of His glory as the creator and sustainer (Ezekiel 28:6; Isaiah 14:13-14; Daniel 11:12). It was the Lord who delivered the fate of the wicked Assyrians in to the hands of the equally wicked Babylonians. Sennacherib preserved his prideful recollections of his victories on the cuneiform prism presently on display in the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago. The prideful are following their master Satan from whom pride originated causing his fall from grace and position. The wicked always receive God's punishment for their sins. The actions of Babylon toward Assyria will be in accordance with their wickedness. Wicked will be aggressive toward the wicked.

THE RESULT OF THE JUDGMENT

Ezekiel 31:12-14

¹²And strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him: upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the watercourses of the land; and all the peoples of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him. ¹³Upon his ruin all the birds of the heavens shall dwell, and all the beasts of the field shall be upon his branches; ¹⁴to the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves in their stature, neither set their top among the thick boughs, nor that their mighty ones stand up on their height, even all that drink water: for they are all delivered unto death, to the nether parts of the earth, in the midst of the children of men, with them that go down to the pit (ASV, 1901).

The Lord now continuing in the metaphor of the cedar tree says that foreigners who are the most terrible of the nation will deal with the tree that they have cut down. Habakkuk describes the Chaldeans (Babylonians) as strangers, terrible and dreadful .

Habakkuk 1:6-9

⁶For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, that march through the breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling-places that are not theirs. ⁷They are terrible and dreadful; their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves. ⁸Their horses also are swifter than leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves; and their horsemen press proudly on: yea, their horsemen come from far; they fly as an eagle that hasteth to devour. ⁹They come all of them for violence; the set of their faces is forwards; and they gather captives as the sand (ASV, 1901).

They came and conquered the Assyrians and continuing the cedar tree imagery the Lord says of the Babylonians, *“have cut him off, and have left him: upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the watercourses of the land; and all the peoples of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left*

him.” The branches of the tree are broken off and the people who depended upon the Assyrians are no longer able to dwell under their shadow. The imagery is now expanded in that the birds and beasts are still there, but instead of dwelling in the boughs, the predators (vultures and owls, jackals and hyenas) hover and creep its over the carcass of the dead, decaying trunk. This is a symbolic expression stating the result of the Assyrians haughtiness in their pride. They were delivered into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar who destroyed it and its people who depended upon them. The final result for the Assyrians is a great lesson regarding shifting and unstable nature of earthly greatness. The nations and prideful people should take heed to this lesson, but they refuse to learn and honor God. They are all delivered to death. Strength is inversely related to haughtiness. As haughtiness increase strength decreases. Since death is the great equalizer no one should be haughty over his dominion and blessing. Satan who is, the god of this age, rules the foolish leaders of the kingdoms of this world. He will be dethroned by the coming of the Lord. He has and still leads nations into ruin. Now our boasting, proud, and corrupt leaders are lifted up and reject the Lord Jesus. A time is rapidly approaching which will bring the judgment, which is a judgment far more severe than those which overtook Assyria and Egypt.

THE WICKED GO TO SHEOL

Ezekiel 31:15-17

¹⁵Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: In the day when he went down to Sheol I caused a mourning: I covered the deep for him, and I restrained the rivers thereof; and the great waters were stayed; and I caused Lebanon to mourn for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him. ¹⁶I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to Sheol with them that descend into the pit; and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, were comforted in the nether parts of the earth. ¹⁷They also went down into Sheol with him unto them that are slain by the sword; yea, they that were his arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the nations.

God says that when the wicked Assyrians went to Sheol, the Old Testament name for the place of the dead with multiple compartments for both the good and the bad. They were mourned by their dependents. God then covered them as it were with the proverbial sackcloth of mourning. Using more imagery of the cedar God says that, “*I restrained the rivers thereof; and the great waters were stayed.*” This means that He withheld nourishment to the tree (Assyria) and it did not grow any more. When the great tree fell the other trees became darkened from mourning. This evil all came about through God. The fate of Assyria as well as of Egypt caused the surrounding nations to tremble with fear. The near nations are mentioned under the figure of trees, “*I caused Lebanon to mourn for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him.*” The nations shake with terror when the powerful are stripped of their worldly greatness. And when Assyria came into Sheol and also Egypt, they found other nations there. These are mentioned by the term “*and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water.*” These terms are symbols of human greatness, glory and prosperity. When they arrived in Sheol the powerful and prosperous nations were “*comforted*” to find that even Pharaoh suffered the same fate and destination as Assyria. It shows that the disembodied state in Sheol is not an unconscious state, but one of consciousness. The further gives evidence that death does not end consciousness. We have much assurance in the Bible to affirm life after

death. The Bible does speak of eternal life beyond this life when we leave the bodies we now inhabit. (John 3:16; 6:68; II Timothy 1:9-10; John 17:3; Jude 21 etc.)

John 6:68

Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life (KJV).

II Timothy 1:9-10

Who hath saved us, and called [us] with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (KJV).

Jesus is the Christ or Messiah. He came from God and He is God. Christ is a title not a surname. He left eternity to enter our time domain.

In the Bible, the immaterial part of man is viewed as being with God upon death and is conscious. There are examples of this truth in both testaments. The Old Testament expresses this doctrine in several places.

Psalms 17:15

As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness (KJV).

Here David expressed a real faith that the soul will still be conscious in the fellowship with God even after death. This is also taught in the following verse:

Psalms 73:23-25 Nevertheless I [am] continually with thee: thou hast holden [me] by my right hand Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me [to] glory. Whom have I in heaven [but thee]? and [there is] none upon earth [that] I desire beside thee (KJV).

In this Psalm, the author Asaph expressed a real faith in immortality. Even upon his death he saw himself as being with God and conscious.

Ecclesiastes 12:7

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it (KJV).

Here Solomon expresses the truth that the body returns to the earth to be decayed and finally become dust, but the spirit goes to be with God our creator.

David expected to be able to join his dead son after his own death.

II Samuel 12:23

But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me (KJV).

David clearly expects to go to the place where his dead son is and to join him in a conscious manner.

The souls in *Sheol* are seen in continuous consciousness. One good example of this is found in Isaiah 14: 9-11:

Isaiah 14:9-11

Sheol from beneath is moved for thee to meet [thee] at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, [even] all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the Sheol, [and] the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee (KJV).

In this passage the soul of the king of Babylon enters into the Hell section of *Sheol* itself, and all the souls that preceded him in Hell are surprised to see this one also entering the domains of Hell. They are able to ask questions and carry on a conversation. These dead people are shown as being conscious.

The same concept is taught in the New Testament in Luke 16:19-31. This is the story of the rich man and Lazarus. God established eternity or continued consciousness in our hearts or inner beings.

Ecclesiastes 3:11

He hath set eternity in their heart (KJV).

The word “heart” is frequently used in Scripture as one of the facets of the immaterial part of mankind. So contained in our “heart” (the immaterial part of man) is the element of immortality (eternity). God set it in our hearts!

Because our relationship to God through Jesus is made during our time here on the earth it is important to realize that we have a glorious future awaiting us. The guarantee for the believer is found in Romans 8:18 and teaches that the believer is destined to be glorified. The process of glorification implies a continuous eternal existence. Romans 8:18 states:

Romans 8:18

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time [are] not worthy [to be compared] with the glory which shall be revealed in us (KJV).

Finally the New Testament says, if there were no future life, the believer would be *most pitiable* since believers would believe in vain. If there were no life after death (immortality) then our entire lifestyle of worldly sin avoidance would be for nothing.

There would be no reason to tailor our lifestyles to that of Christ's Law. Therefore, immortality must be true because of the kind of lifestyle we are expected to have.

1 Corinthians 15:19

If in this life only we have hope; in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable.

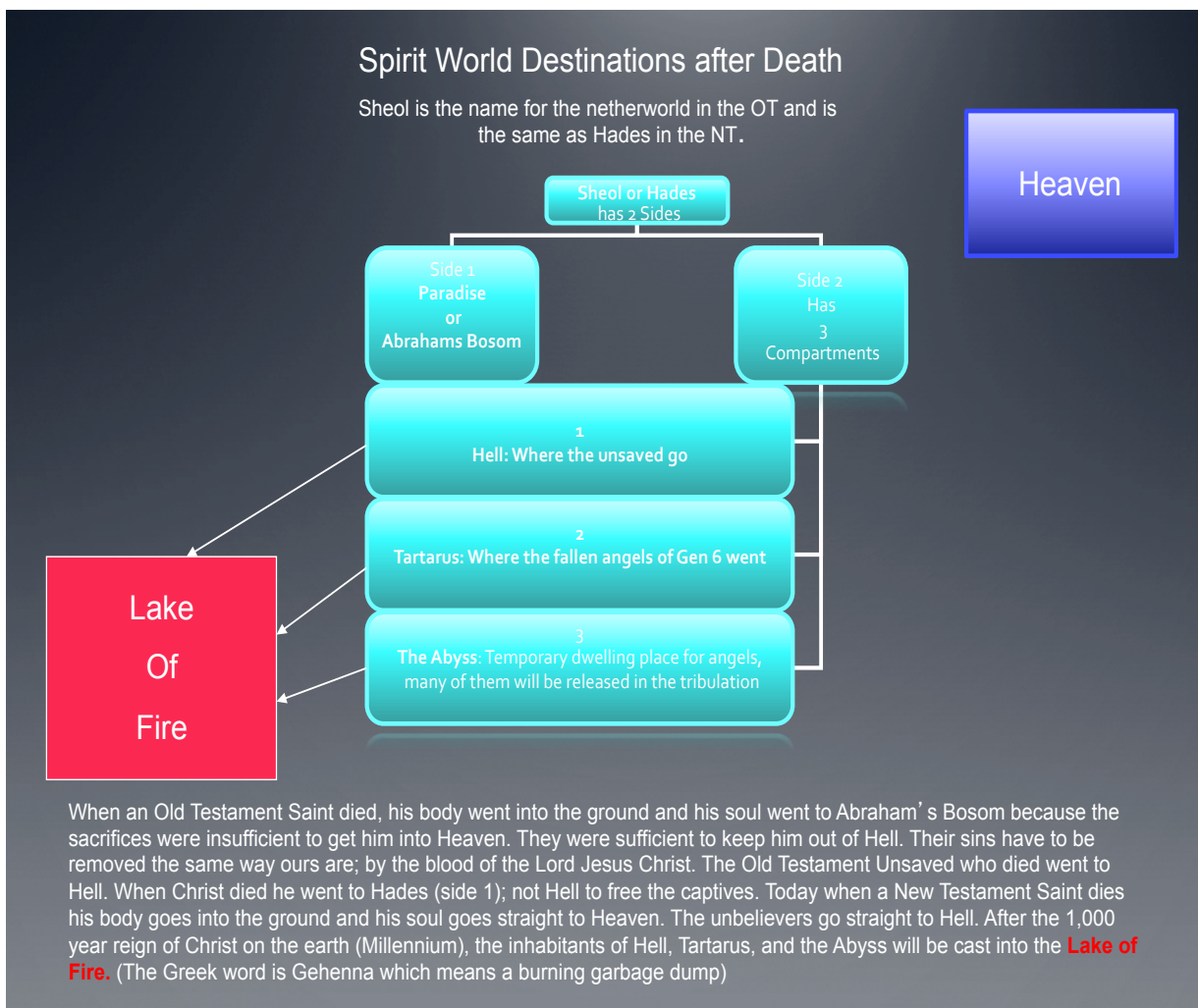


Chart by Daniel Woodhead

NEXT MESSAGE: THE PROPHECY AGAINST EGYPT CONCLUDED.

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments

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