

Pentwater Bible Church

Book of Ezekiel

Message 24

February 14, 2016



The Siege and Destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans Under the Command of Titus, A.D. 70, by David Roberts Cir 1850

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Message Twenty-Four

Jerusalem Will Not Be Spared

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Ezekiel 14:12-23

¹²And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, ¹³Son of man, when a land sinneth against me by committing a trespass, and I stretch out my hand upon it, and break the staff of the bread thereof, and send famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast; ¹⁴though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord Jehovah. ¹⁵If I cause evil beasts to pass through the land, and they ravage it, and it be made desolate, so that no man may pass through because of the beasts; ¹⁶though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, they should deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only should be delivered, but the land should be desolate. ¹⁷Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off from it man and beast; ¹⁸though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, they should deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they only should be delivered themselves. ¹⁹Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my wrath upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast; ²⁰though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, they should deliver neither son nor daughter; they should but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.

²¹For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the evil beasts, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast! ²²Yet, behold, therein shall be left a remnant that shall be carried forth, both sons and daughters: behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way and their doings; and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, even concerning all that I have brought upon it. ²³And they shall comfort you, when ye see their way and their doings; and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

THE LAND IS JUDGED

Ezekiel 14:12-13

¹²And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, ¹³Son of man, when a land sinneth against me by committing a trespass, and I stretch out my hand upon it, and break the staff of the bread thereof, and send famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast (ASV, 1901).

This section of Scripture finds God bringing judgment on the land of Israel for its gross sin of being unfaithful to Him (Exodus 20:3). God describes the first type of destructive means He will use. Beginning with famine which He will bring causing humans and animals to starve in judgment. If the animals starve along with the people they can't be used for food because they will relocate in search of food for themselves and they are more prone to attack the people. Aspects of this judgment seem to present difficulties regarding what He said in other situations.

The difficulties, which deny two fundamental principles of the faithful, seem to be inconsistent with His nature. The first difficulty seemingly lies in the inability of righteous people to protect their community and families. In one sense the Old Testament saints cited in this section of Scripture (Noah, Daniel & Job) were very righteous men chosen by God for special tasks. It seems that the righteous citizens of Jerusalem who they are representing are unable to save their land and families. The New Testament teaches us that if a man does not provide for his own especially his own family he is worse than an unbeliever (I Timothy 5:8). The second principle teaches that God ordains some to stand as a protective wall between Him and the people when He exercises His divine wrath to protect the people when they sin and deserve His righteous indignation and judgment. Such was the case with Moses telling the people how he interceded for them.

Deuteronomy 9:25

²⁵So I fell down before Jehovah the forty days and forty nights that I fell down, because Jehovah had said he would destroy you. ²⁶And I prayed unto Jehovah, and said, O Lord Jehovah, destroy not thy people and thine inheritance, that thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, that thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand. ²⁷Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin, ²⁸lest the land whence thou broughtest us out say, Because Jehovah was not able to bring them into the land which he promised unto them, and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness. ²⁹Yet they are thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out by thy great power and by thine outstretched arm (ASV, 1901).

During this very difficult time in Israel's history God expresses His frustration through Ezekiel and Jeremiah with the people.

Jeremiah 15:1

Then said Jehovah unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind would not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth (ASV, 1901).

Later in the book of Ezekiel God tells him why this has happened to Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 22:30

And I sought for a man among them, that should build up the wall, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none (ASV, 1901).

This demonstrates that even though these two men were righteous and tried to sway the people they were unable to do so. The prayer of a righteous person can help a community (James 5:16b) if they are part of a more general effort to bring about repentance and their resulting reforms. God explains this situation through Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 5:1

Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that doeth justly, that seeketh truth; and I will pardon her (ASV, 1901).

In order for the righteous to be able to convince the people in the general community they have to be able to move about the community and make a connection with the people. The righteous people in Jerusalem were banished from intermingling and had to stay in their homes. Jeremiah was jailed and Ezekiel was confined to his house. None of these righteous individuals were able to bring God's influence to the general population because they were in forced isolation. The spiritual principle here is that wicked people want to rid society of those through whom God's Word is taught. God allows the evil to prevail for a season. He gives them over to themselves for destruction (Romans 1:28-32). So a righteous person would be hindered from reaching them with the truth. Jesus taught that the world hates the believers because it hated Him first (John 15:18). Those who do not want God's truth to go out try and stifle free speech.

THE THREE RIGHTEOUS MEN

Ezekiel 14:14

¹⁴though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

God had purposed to destroy Jerusalem. Even if three of the most righteous men who have ever lived were in it they would only be able to save themselves not others. The general population of Jerusalem would perish. Noah stood up in the face of extreme opposition for 120 years as he built the ark. The Pseudepigraphic book of Jasher describes the outcome.

Jasher 6:15-25

¹⁵ And Noah and his household, and all the living creatures that were with him, came into the ark on account of the waters of the flood, and the Lord shut him in. ¹⁶ And all the sons of men that were left upon the earth, became exhausted through evil on account of the rain, for the waters were coming more violently upon the earth, and the animals and beasts were still surrounding the ark. ¹⁷ And the sons of men assembled together, about seven hundred thousand men and women, and they came unto Noah to the ark. ¹⁸ And they called to Noah, saying, Open for us that we may come to thee in the ark--and wherefore shall we die? ¹⁹ And Noah, with a loud voice, answered them from the ark, saying, Have you not all rebelled against the Lord, and said that he does not exist? and therefore the Lord brought upon you this evil, to destroy and cut you off

from the face of the earth. ²⁰ Is not this the thing that I spoke to you of one hundred and twenty years back, and you would not hearken to the voice of the Lord, and now do you desire to live upon earth? ²¹ And they said to Noah, We are ready to return to the Lord; only open for us that we may live and not die. ²² And Noah answered them, saying, Behold now that you see the trouble of your souls, you wish to return to the Lord; why did you not return during these hundred and twenty years, which the Lord granted you as the determined period? ²³ But now you come and tell me this on account of the troubles of your souls, now also the Lord will not listen to you, neither will he give ear to you on this day, so that you will not now succeed in your wishes. ²⁴ And the sons of men approached in order to break into the ark, to come in on account of the rain, for they could not bear the rain upon them. ²⁵ And the Lord sent all the beasts and animals that stood round the ark. And the beasts overpowered them and drove them from that place, and every man went his way and they again scattered themselves upon the face of the earth.

Daniel faced much opposition, which included being thrown into a lion's den. He survived an unrighteous law, which caused him to be cast into a den of lions for one night. He survived but the unrighteous that opposed him did not.

Daniel 6:24

²⁴And the king commanded, and they brought those men that had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces, before they came to the bottom of the den (ASV, 1901).

Job was able to persevere in spite of God allowing Satan to destroy his family, livelihood and health. He withstood jeering from even his wife and his friends while he suffered. In spite of all this he eventually was restored to greater position than before.

THE MEANS OF JUDGMENT & TRANSFERENCE OF SALVATION

Ezekiel 14:15-16

¹⁵If I cause evil beasts to pass through the land, and they ravage it, and it be made desolate, so that no man may pass through because of the beasts; ¹⁶though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, they should deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only should be delivered, but the land should be desolate. ¹⁷Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off from it man and beast; ¹⁸though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, they should deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they only should be delivered themselves. ¹⁹Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my wrath upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast; ²⁰though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, they should deliver neither son nor daughter; they should but deliver their own souls by their righteousness (ASV, 1901).

God begins to describe the means of the destruction He will cause to come on Jerusalem. He will bring hungry wild beasts, the Babylonian's swords, and pestilence (disease or epidemic). Even if the three most righteous men in the Bible as they have been described were in the land only they themselves would be saved. The rest of the unrighteous population would perish. These three men's children would not even survive because of these men's righteousness. This indicates that parents are only responsible for training their offspring. Each person has to develop his or her own relationship to God. The parents cannot do it for them. God will use all of these four means to punish the land and kill its people (Ezekiel 5:17). All four (famine, beasts, armaments, disease) will be used during the Tribulation when God pours His judgment on the whole earth as the Lord Jesus opens the fourth seal on the scroll which is the title deed to the earth.

Revelation 6:7-8

⁷ And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth |cherubim| say, Come and see. ⁸ And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth (KJV).

THE SUMMARY OF THE JUDGMENTS

Ezekiel 14:21

²¹ For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the evil beasts, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast (ASV, 1901)!

God summarized the judgments that are simultaneously coming on Jerusalem. He says, "Surely it will be so now!" Any one of these aspects of the judgment would be able to destroy the land by itself. In fact because of these it will be all the more impossible to deliver the land from them. The righteous men of Jerusalem could not do it because they were forbidden to commune with the people. Even if the three most righteous men in the Bible were there they could not avert God's judgment. But the grace of God in this carrying out of His divine justified judgment would not completely annihilate the Jews in Jerusalem.

GOD ALWAYS LEAVES A REMNANT

Ezekiel 14:22

²² Yet, behold, therein shall be left a remnant that shall be carried forth, both sons and daughters: behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way and their doings; and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, even concerning all that I have brought upon it (ASV, 1901).

God always leaves a remnant of His people when judgment has been carried out. Ezekiel, like Jeremiah (Jeremiah 44:27) and Amos (Amos 9:8, 11–15), spoke of total annihilation but at the same time prophesied the survival of a small remnant (Ezekiel 14:22). The

appearance of the remnant would be a cause for consolation (Ezekiel 11:14–20 in response to 11:13). The comfort would not come “in the midst” of judgment but “out of” (v. 22) or by it. In other words because of the judgment and seeing the people that made it through there would be comfort in knowing that there was not total annihilation. These are God’s promises to them from many years before when the Law was given to Moses (cir. 1440 B.C.). The Bible describes at least seven different remnant groups surviving major catastrophes.

- 1) Survivors of catastrophe at Sodom and Gomorrah.
- 2) A group of non-Israelite survivors called the remnant of Edom cited in Amos 9:12.
- 3) Israelite survivors of the Assyrian invasion in 721-718 BC.
- 4) Jewish survivors of the Babylonian invasion cited here in 585 BC (Ezekiel 14:22).
- 5) The remnant of Jews who returned to Judah from Babylon.
- 6) The remainder of physical Israelites and Jews after the Great Tribulation.
- 7) The remnant of converted sons of God in the last days from Joel 2:32.

Leviticus 26:44-45

⁴⁴And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them; for I am Jehovah their God; ⁴⁵but I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

THE COMFORTING AFTER CORRECTION

Ezekiel 14:23

²³And they shall comfort you, when ye see their way and their doings; and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

The overall experience of the wickedness of those who escaped the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. would enable the earlier prisoners of war to see that judgment had been deserved. God had to use necessary refinement to produce a righteous remnant. The captives already in Babylon from the first two deportations would take comfort in this fact since it would teach them that by loyalty to God they could escape a similar fate. These are the people especially the elders who came to Ezekiel’s home for prophetic messages. Comfort would come only after judgment had been fully carried out. People would be forced to accept the fact that the judgment as evil as it was needed to be administered.

NEXT MESSAGE: THE PARABLE OF THE VINE TREE

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments

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