

# 17–18 Bible Study # 5

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# Ezekiel (Cont)

- **Ezekiel 5:1-5**

- God calls Ezekiel to perform another prophetic act by shaving off his hair and beard
  - 1/3 he will burn with fire
  - 1/3 he will cut up in small pieces and spread it around the city
  - 1/3 he is to scatter in the wind
- This was a sign of the three ways the people of God will be destroyed when the Babylonians attack Jerusalem \*

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- **Ezekiel 5:6-17**

- God points out that those in Jerusalem have **sinned against His commandments**, ordinances and decrees **more than any of the nations round about**
- He promises to punish them beyond anything He has ever done before nor will he ever do again
- The prediction that fathers will “eat their sons” is based on events that had occurred in the past during horrific famines often caused by a siege \*

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- **Ezekiel 7:1-26**

- In this section God informs Ezekiel that the end has come and He will destroy the **temple in Jerusalem**
- Those in the exile must have wondered why God would do this
- As discussed earlier, those in the first two groups in the exile thought that they had been taken in exile due to the sins of their fathers, not due to their own personal sins
- Second, they believed that God was being unjust and too rough on them

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- Finally, they thought that God was going to have mercy and allow them to return to Jerusalem very soon
- Ezekiel was told by God to tell the people that they were mistaken on all three counts:
- In fact:
  - Everyone was in exile as a result of their personal sins
  - The punishment was not only just but merciful as they deserved death for their sins ( God was giving them a “time out”)
  - Finally, the big shocker, which will be discussed as a major part of the rest of the book, is that they will not be returning to Jerusalem, for it will be destroyed before they had any chance to return! \*

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- **Ezekiel 8:1-4**

- In this section, Ezekiel is told by God why He is going to destroy Jerusalem and why those already in Exile are not going to have a chance to return
- This is happening in 599 BC, one year after the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the second Exile (605 BC)
- In this vision **Ezekiel falls in a trance** while in the **presence** of the **Jewish elders in Babylon**
- He sees a hand reach forth and grab him by his hair and transport him to the temple precinct in Jerusalem

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- His body is still in Babylon, while in his vision he sees himself in Jerusalem
- The first thing he sees is a pagan statue of an image of jealousy after he was dropped by the front gate of the temple facing north
- Then he sees the Glory of God within the temple area \*

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- **Ezekiel 8:5-18**

- Ezekiel recognizes one of the priests in the temple who is offering incense to a pagan image
- He also sees 25 men worshiping the sun
- Tammuz is the winter/spring goddess
- When he looked inside the temple, the people in Jerusalem were committing idolatry and performing violence against the poor and oppressed
- This same topic will come up in Jeremiah and 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings
- The next question is what will God do in response to these evils? \*



# Ezekiel (Cont)

- **Ezekiel 9: 1-2**

- In almost every instance war in Jerusalem and Juda came from the North
  - The Assyrians, Babylonians and Romans came from the north over the Fertile Crescent
  - The only exceptions were the incursions from Egypt
- Thus, “north” is often seen as a symbol of judgment
- The **priests** were **clothed in linen** \*

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- **Ezekiel 9: 3-6**

- The vision begins in the temple as these angels work their way into the city of Jerusalem
- These are images of angelic judgement, but at the same time it depicts the Babylonian attacks on the city
- This shows that it is not just the attacking Babylonians but the attack is being helped by angelic forces
- As we know, God provided Israel with angelic help to chastise the Amorites, Canaanites and the people in the Promised Land
- Again, God sends the Babylonians against the people of Jerusalem and he provides them with angelic help
- **Jerusalem** has become **the enemy of God!**

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- The problem is that many of the people were committing idolatry by worshiping pagan gods
- An angel is called to go through the city and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who “sighed” and “groaned” over all the abominations that were being committed
- These were the “poor of the land” of Judah and city of Jerusalem who had remained faithful to Yahweh but could do nothing to stop the abominations

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- What is the meaning of this “**mark upon the forehead**”?
- It may remind you of the image in **Revelation 13:16\*** concerning the “mark, that is the name of the beast”
- But to properly understand the image of the beast we must look at **Revelation 7:3-4 \***
  - This passage deals with those who had **refused to participate in the Roman idolatry** and were identified by a mark (seal) on their foreheads

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- When writing the Book of Revelation John assumes that his audience knows this story of **Ezekiel 9** concerning the protective mark on the forehead of the righteous in Jerusalem
- This is also a payoff of the image from **Exodus 13:16\*** where we are told that Israel must offer their firstborn males to God and place a mark on their hands or frontlets between their eyes to memorialize that God, using His strong hand, brought them out of Egypt

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- A mark on their hand reflects their outward (physical) action
- A mark on their forehead or on a frontlet hanging between their eyes is a mark of inward (intellectual) action
- Those who kept the law wore a frontlet hanging between their eyes and a phylactery on tied to their hands
- Those who do not have the law of God as a mark on their forehead are those who have not kept the law of God

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- As a result, only the wicked were destroyed or taken off into captivity
- The righteous, marked with the law of God on their foreheads, were be left behind
- The next issue Ezekiel will deal with is what is going to happen to the Glory cloud of God \*

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- **Ezekiel 10:3-5**

- Here we see why Ezekiel presented the cherubic throne in Ezekiel 1
- What is happening at this point is that God is getting His chariot ready to get out of the temple and Jerusalem
- The Glory Cloud was previously resting on the cherubic throne **within the Holy of Holies**
- At this point the cherubic throne is waiting to leave the temple by moving through the Holy Place \*



# Ezekiel (Cont)

- **Ezekiel 10:18-19**

- Remember that the temple faced **East**
- God is on his chariot throne moving out of the Beautiful Gate to the east toward the Mount of Olives
- Imagine that you leave your front door and move through the front gate of your property and onto the curb of the road in front of your house \*

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- **Ezekiel 11:19-21**

- This is a very famous passage from Ezekiel
- Ezekiel asks God if he would destroy the remnant of Israel (EZ 11:13)
- God responded that He had “marked” all of the godly, and even though they would suffer with the wicked, they would become the remnant
- Thus, there was hope even in the midst of judgment, for God promised to renew his involvement in the regathering of the remnant

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- To bring about a spiritual transformation
- To effect covenant renewal
- Yahweh is therefore the hope of Israel \*

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- **Ezekiel 11:22-25**

- The prophet wakes up in Babylon and relates to the people of Judah what he saw in his vision to include; the Temple in Jerusalem filled with pagan idols
- This is very bad since the good King Josiah had:
  - Cleansed the temple of all its idolatry
  - Destroyed all the pagan temples that Solomon had allowed his wives to build
  - Removed all forms of polytheism from Judah
  - Gone north and destroyed the two temples to the golden calf

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- Obviously the people did not take this reform to heart
- In fact, Ezekiel saw was a statue of a pagan god dedicated to the image of jealousy
- There were women in Jerusalem weeping for *Tammuz*, the winter/spring goddess
- Others were outside the temple worshiping the “sun god”
- Some of the priests were in an inner secret room offering incense to pagan gods
- Things are pretty bad!

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- God told Ezekiel that the exiles were not going to return to Jerusalem because they had fallen back into pagan polytheism
- Further, and as a result of this, Jerusalem is going to be destroyed because it has been filled with pagan idols
- All is forsaken

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- An obvious question is what happened to the Glory Cloud?
- God tells Ezekiel not to worry, and shows him that the Glory Cloud (and the ark) are going right out of the front door of the temple to the mountain East of the temple (the Mount of Olives, also known as the place of judgment for the city)
- More information concerning these events will be found in:
  - The Book of Zechariah
  - Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21; all of which predict the destruction of the temple in 70 AD

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- At this point, as discussed earlier, King Zedekiah tried to flee the city by cutting a hole through the wall, but was captured and exiled by the Babylonians
- This image of Ezekiel corresponded to the actual events happening on the ground at the time \*