

# Pentwater Bible Church

*Book of Ezekiel*  
*Message 45*  
*July 17, 2016*



The Prodigal Son by Rembrandt Cir 1669

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The Book of Ezekiel  
Message Forty-Five

## THE FALSE PROPHETS HAVE DEVoured SOULS

July 17, 2016

Daniel E. Woodhead

Ezekiel 22:23:31

<sup>23</sup>And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, <sup>24</sup>Son of man, say unto her, Thou art a land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation. <sup>25</sup>There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey: they have devoured souls; they take treasure and precious things; they have made her widows many in the midst thereof. <sup>26</sup>Her priests have done violence to my law, and have profaned my holy things: they have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they caused men to discern between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. <sup>27</sup>Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, that they may get dishonest gain. <sup>28</sup>And her prophets have daubed for them with untempered mortar, seeing false visions, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, when Jehovah hath not spoken. <sup>29</sup>The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery; yea, they have vexed the poor and needy, and have oppressed the sojourner wrongfully. <sup>30</sup>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. <sup>31</sup>Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I brought upon their heads, saith the Lord Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

### THE RAIN OF INDIGNATION

Ezekiel 22:23-24

<sup>23</sup>And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, <sup>24</sup>Son of man, say unto her, Thou art a land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation (ASV, 1901).

Again as God brings His messages to the world and particularly the Jews prior to the final Babylonian captivity through Ezekiel He address him with *Son of man, say unto her*. As this message is directed to the entire nation of Israel which is referenced as a female with the pronoun *her*. God directs the message to the entire land and says to them all, “*Thou art a land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation.*” In the next six verses it becomes apparent that all Israelites are included in this message from Jehovah. He includes:

1. Prophets (verse 25),
2. Priests (verse 26),
3. Princes or governmental officials (verse 27),

4. Prophets again (verse 28)
5. People, the general population (verse 29).

This section of Scripture therefore depicts the tragic and total disintegration of all areas of leadership and therefore the general population in Judah. God goes on to say that so far the various corrections He has put in place the *land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation*. Israel had not received any rain because of the blatant sin. Because she had not experienced cleansing (from sin); she had not received rain (blessings) in the days of judgments previous to this impending judgment such as the Assyrian invasion in 722 B.C.; the Babylonian invasions of 605 and 597 B.C. Rain in the Old Testament has been viewed as a blessing from the Lord as a result of obedience to His Law. Conversely if there was disobedience the withholding of rain was imminent. It is quite clear that He means to do it again.

Deuteronomy 11:17; 28:23-25

*<sup>17</sup>and the anger of Jehovah be kindled against you, and he shut up the heavens, so that there shall be no rain, and the land shall not yield its fruit; and ye perish quickly from off the good land which Jehovah giveth you (ASV, 1901).*

*<sup>23</sup>And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. <sup>24</sup>Jehovah will make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.*

*<sup>25</sup>Jehovah will cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies; thou shalt go out one way against them, and shalt flee seven ways before them: and thou shalt be tossed to and from among all the kingdoms of the earth (ASV, 1901).*

## PROPHETS

Ezekiel 22:25

*<sup>25</sup>There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey: they have devoured souls; they take treasure and precious things; they have made her widows many in the midst thereof (ASV, 1901).*

Jerusalem's false prophets seemed to be unanimous in their propensity to do evil. They lulled the people into a sense of false security based on some false ideology that Jerusalem and the Jews were under God's protection. Therefore whatever they did He would protect them from evil. This group will be again addressed in verse 28 and it is God's way of stressing the importance of the work the prophets were assigned to carry out. They were mainly responsible for the disintegration of the society. Genuine prophetic leaders have the primary responsibility in a society to bring God's Word accurately and forcefully to bear on a nation's sins. These false prophets with their lying messages, instead of saving souls and warning to flee from the wrath to come, devoured souls. They failed miserably. He says that they exhibit characteristics of a *roaring lion ravening the prey*. Their primary interest was self advancement in terms of material possessions which God calls *taking treasure and precious things*. The false prophets made widows of the wives of the soldiers who they falsely assured of victory in spite of the Lord saying that they would not be victorious (Jeremiah 36:29-31). The work of the false prophets opposed that of the true prophets (I Kings 22). God had warned the nation Israel of the danger of false prophets

among the population. The Lord warned of them and gave them a test for determining the validity of the prophet's messages.

Deuteronomy 18:20-22

*<sup>20</sup>But the prophet, that shall speak a word presumptuously in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die. <sup>21</sup>And if thou say in thy heart, How shall we know the word which Jehovah hath not spoken? <sup>22</sup>when a prophet speaketh in the name of Jehovah, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which Jehovah hath not spoken: the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously, thou shalt not be afraid of him (ASV, 1901).*

PRIESTS

Ezekiel 22:26

*<sup>26</sup>Her priests have done violence to my law, and have profaned my holy things: they have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they caused men to discern between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them (ASV, 1901).*

Whereas the prophets were responsible for bringing God's Word to the people, the priests were responsible for bringing the people to God. They were supposed to provide instruction in the Law to the people. They were also assigned the task of guarding the holiness and purity of the activities associated with the Temple. They failed to guard the holiness and purity of the house of God and thereby led the people away from Him. They blurred the line between holy and unclean which caused people to stumble. And when the Sabbath was ignored due to their false teaching they looked the other way instead of correcting the people and bringing them back in repentance to God and His Laws. As a result God accuses them of Him being made irreverent (*profaned*). They made the people to lose respect for God because of the way they treated Him. God said through Zephaniah that both prophets and priests had become treacherous people.

Zephaniah 3:4

*<sup>4</sup>Her prophets are light and treacherous persons; her priests have profaned the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law (ASV, 1901).*

PRINCES OR GOVERNMENTAL OFFICIALS

Ezekiel 22:27

*<sup>27</sup>Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, that they may get dishonest gain (ASV, 1901).*

Whereas the false prophets were characterized *like a roaring lion ravening the prey: they have devoured souls*, now the princes are looked on as *wolves ravening the prey*. The princes were just as bad as the prophets and the priests. They also shed blood and

destroyed people so they could steal from the people. These sinful leaders had their own personal gain as their primary desire and not God's Laws and the people's best interest to oversee. The people were sinful and were cursed with wicked and unfeeling leaders who held personal material gain as their primary objective in running the government. God said through the prophet Micah that the governmental officials also known as the princes were severely corrupt.

Micah 3:9-11

*<sup>9</sup>Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and rulers of the house of Israel, that abhor justice, and pervert all equity. <sup>10</sup>They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. <sup>11</sup>The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet they lean upon Jehovah, and say, Is not Jehovah in the midst of us? no evil shall come upon us (ASV, 1901).*

FALSE PROPHETS

Ezekiel 22:28

*<sup>28</sup>And her prophets have daubed for them with untempered mortar, seeing false visions, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, when Jehovah hath not spoken (ASV, 1901).*

For emphasis God included the false prophets again in this diatribe against the leaders of the nation Israel at this time in their history. They were the primary communicators of God's Word to His people. They therefore bore the primary responsibility of providing the spiritual and moral conscience of God to the nation. Instead of bringing the solid Word of God they gave the people something God calls *untempered mortar*. Which is to say that what they said did not hold up to scrutiny. They proffered up false visions and plainly lied to the people about what God was saying regarding their lives at that time. In the face of the very near impending destruction of Jerusalem and fall of Judah, they continued to preach peace and safety for their own personal gain. They were blinded to their truth. If they were truly aware of God's Word they would know what was going to happen. This destruction would come upon them too. The prophet is the messenger of God's Word and most people do not want to hear what they have to say (I Kings 22:18).

Amos 3:6-8

*<sup>6</sup>Shall the trumpet be blown in a city, and the people not be afraid? shall evil befall a city, and Jehovah hath not done it? <sup>7</sup>Surely the Lord Jehovah will do nothing, except he reveal his secret unto his servants the prophets. <sup>8</sup>The lion hath roared; who will not fear? The Lord Jehovah hath spoken; who can but prophesy (ASV, 1901)?*

THE PEOPLE

Ezekiel 22:29

*<sup>29</sup>The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery; yea, they have vexed the poor and needy, and have oppressed the sojourner wrongfully (ASV, 1901).*

False corrupt leaders will cause the people to turn away from God and follow after the leaders. God in no way excused them for their behavior. He says to them that they have used the excuse of oppression of corrupt leaders to become robbers, take advantage of the poor and needy and treat the visitors with oppression. The people were simply extortioners, robbers, oppressors, as well as inhospitable subverters of justice. All because of a neglect of God's Word the society had become filled with violence, greed, graft and an indifference to suffering. There was no discipline in the homes (Ezekiel 22:7). Moral and sexual perversions were commonly seen (Ezekiel 22:9–11). Crime and general lack of moral restraint was widespread (Ezekiel 22:12). Even though the leaders were corrupt and influenced the people, the individuals in society knew what their responsibility to God was. They too left the restraining influence of God's Word, His Law for personal greed and moral corruption.

The twenty-first century has seen corruption, decadence, moral and spiritual decay, loss of integrity, violence, and injustices that parallel what God accused the Israelites of in Ezekiel's time. Some contemporary groups are concerned about injustice, violence, pornography, and abortion; but their best efforts seem devoted to fighting it and banning it. There is very little national discussion regarding God's Laws and His moral order. Abortion and sexual deviancy have been elevated by the national government as rights and not moral violations of God's Laws. All the same disgusting corruption continues because the savior of the universe has been rejected in favor of personal gain and moral corruption.

GOD SOUGHT A MAN

Ezekiel 22:30-31

*<sup>30</sup>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.  
<sup>31</sup>Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I brought upon their heads, saith the Lord Jehovah (ASV, 1901).*

God has always had a special man to lead in difficult moral and spiritual crisis. He used Noah, Moses, Deborah, Daniel and Ezekiel as well as others. God said that at that time there was no one to take the lead and stand in the breaches of the wall so he would not destroy the land. Similarly God promised to spare Sodom and Gomorrah if but ten righteous persons were found there. God did not have anyone willing to correct the immorality and "stand before Him in the gap." The illustration of a hole in the wall was selected due to the impending fall of Jerusalem as the Babylonians breached the wall with holes. But there was no one who would respond to the plea of God. Therefore God would pour out his wrath and consume them in his fiery anger.

NEXT MESSAGE: THE TWO HARLOTS

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