

Pentwater Bible Church

Book of Ezekiel
Message 43
July 3, 2016



The Jews Gathering The Manna in the Desert by Nicolas Poussin Cir 1637-39

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher

Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Ezekiel
Message Forty-Three

The Sins of Israel are Counted

July 3, 2016

Daniel E. Woodhead

Ezekiel 22:1-16

¹ Moreover the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, ² And thou, son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge the bloody city? then cause her to know all her abominations. ³ And thou shalt say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: A city that sheddeth blood in the midst of her, that her time may come, and that maketh idols against herself to defile her! ⁴ Thou art become guilty in thy blood that thou hast shed, and art defiled in thine idols which thou hast made; and thou hast caused thy days to draw near, and art come even unto thy years: therefore have I made thee a reproach unto the nations, and a mocking to all the countries. ⁵ Those that are near, and those that are far from thee, shall mock thee, thou infamous one and full of tumult.

⁶ Behold, the princes of Israel, every one according to his power, have been in thee to shed blood. ⁷ In thee have they set light by father and mother; in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the sojourner; in thee have they wronged the fatherless and the widow. ⁸ Thou hast despised my holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths. ⁹ Slanderous men have been in thee to shed blood; and in thee they have eaten upon the mountains: in the midst of thee they have committed lewdness. ¹⁰ In thee have they uncovered their fathers' nakedness; in thee have they humbled her that was unclean in her impurity. ¹¹ And one hath committed abomination with his neighbor's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter-in-law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter. ¹² In thee have they taken bribes to shed blood; thou hast taken interest and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbors by oppression, and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord Jehovah.

¹³ Behold, therefore, I have smitten my hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee. ¹⁴ Can thy heart endure, or can thy hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? I, Jehovah, have spoken it, and will do it. ¹⁵ And I will scatter thee among the nations, and disperse thee through the countries; and I will consume thy filthiness out of thee. ¹⁶ And thou shalt be profaned in thyself, in the sight of the nations; and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

THE BLOODY & IDOLATROUS CITY

Ezekiel 22:1-2

¹ Moreover the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, ² And thou, son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge the bloody city? then cause her to know all her abominations (ASV, 1901).

This chapter begins with the Lord God asking Ezekiel in a very direct manner if he is prepared to judge the city of Jerusalem while referring to it as *the bloody city*. He repeats the request to add urgency to what He is asking Ezekiel to do. He is asking him to bring charges up against the people of Jerusalem. Calling it a bloody city He is referring to the huge volume of children that were offered up to Molech to be burned alive or murdered first followed with the body being burned in the furnace (II Kings 17:17-18). This chapter is the strongest denunciation of Jerusalem in the Old Testament. The Nation Israel had taken the abominable practices of the Gentile nations surrounding them and acted worse than the Gentiles. Jerusalem is a very special place on this earth. It is an earthly city but has a parallel in Heaven. It is the place that God called home on earth as His Shekinah Glory resided in His Tabernacle and Temple when He dwelt among the Children of Israel. The city will be renovated and populated by redeemed people during the Messianic Kingdom which will give way to the Heavenly Jerusalem finally being established on this earth. However at the time of Ezekiel it had succumbed to the lowest depths of depravity. Up until now in this book and especially in chapter twenty He has focused on Israel's past sins. Now the focus is on the present sins taking place in Judah and Jerusalem. God harshly tells Ezekiel to *cause her to know all her abominations*. Jerusalem had sunk below the level of even the Assyrians in Nineveh the capital in seventh century B.C. Nahum's day (Nahum 3:1).

GUILTY IS THE VERDICT

Ezekiel 22: 3-5

³And thou shalt say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: A city that sheddeth blood in the midst of her, that her time may come, and that maketh idols against herself to defile her! ⁴Thou art become guilty in thy blood that thou hast shed, and art defiled in thine idols which thou hast made; and thou hast caused thy days to draw near, and art come even unto thy years therefore have I made thee a reproach unto the nations, and a mocking to all the countries. ⁵Those that are near, and those that are far from thee, shall mock thee, thou infamous one and full of tumult (ASV, 1901):

Disregard for the Law of God led to an increase in crimes of violence which led God to call it *the bloody city*. Blood was so openly shed within the city of Jerusalem that the people did not even bother to hide their crimes. Bloodshed had become commonplace which led to the pollution of it just like the days of Manasseh who died just fifty-three earlier (II Kings 21:16). The idolatry they engaged in which the text calls *maketh idols against herself to defile her*, is representative of the level of degradation into which Jerusalem had sunk. Idol worship occurs when people have degraded themselves with overindulgence in mind altering experiences, occultic practices, and sexual immorality. Self worth of the individual through these practices becomes eroded to the point of rendering them incapable of seeing the image of God in the spirit of man. This leads to murder which is not too difficult to commit if one does not recognize the divine in the human. Christ said a time again is coming on this earth where because of increased wickedness people's love for one another will grow cold (Matthew 24:12). The evolutionary model of our origin which is prevalent today causes one to believe that the divine does not cause the human body and spirit to exist. From this secular humanist view of origins, murder is not too far behind. Interestingly the prohibition against idol worship follows with God's declaration to be Holy (Leviticus 19:2). This lets us see God's view

that the sin of idolatry defiles the divine in us, our souls, which God wants us to keep for Him.

Proverbs 4:23

Keep thy heart with all diligence; For out of it are the issues of life (ASV, 1901).

Keep thy heart with all diligence. It is important for a believer to keep a strict guard upon our souls; keep our hearts from doing hurt, and getting hurt. God gives us a good reason; because out of it come the source of life. As additional preparation to guard us we should continually seek the Lord Jesus that living water, the sanctifying Spirit, issuing forth unto everlasting life.

The Devil and his fallen angels continually seek whom they may devour. This is their desired goal; the pollution of our souls so as to cause us to turn from God and seek after inordinate pleasure which will lead to bloodshed. With the total erosion of their view of God and an elimination of Him from their lives the Jews were about to receive the divine punishment for their sins. This contrasts with God's plan for Israel as the ambassadors of the earth for Him.

Deuteronomy 28:10

And all the peoples of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of Jehovah; and they shall be afraid of thee (ASV, 1901).

So instead of the Gentile nations seeing the God fearing and God blessed Israelites and fearing them, God says, "*Those that are near, and those that are far from thee, shall mock thee.*" The nation Israel had lost all its respect on the world scene which is true of any nation that knows the Lord and departs from His laws and recognizing Him in all that they say and do.

THE CRIMES ARE ENUMERATED

Ezekiel 22:6-8

⁶Behold, the princes of Israel, every one according to his power, have been in thee to shed blood. ⁷In thee have they set light by father and mother; in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the sojourner; in thee have they wronged the fatherless and the widow. ⁸Thou hast despised my holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths (ASV, 1901).

The princes of Israel have been forgetting their duty to the people of Israel in their pursuit of personal power, prestige, and wealth. The root of the problem is that they have forgotten God (Ezekiel 23:15). The Hebrew word for princes is *nasee*. It means to be exulted high above the earth (Jeremiah 10:13, 51:16; Psalms 135:7; Proverbs 25:14). A true prince, *nasee*, should be exulted above his people but only so that he has the power to bestow justice and wealth upon them. He gets wealth and power from the people but only by giving them the Godly care and justice they need. They rejected the light of God which was imparted by Godly parents. Parents are elevated to that of the Creator in that they

bring children into the world as new souls. God's light is transmitted through the parents to the children when they bring their children up in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6). The princes rejected their parents and treated them badly. They dealt harshly with the orphans, widows and the visitors in Israel as well. In direct violation of Leviticus 19:30. By blaspheming the sabbaths in the Old Testament they were essentially saying that they had forgotten God to the point of even recognizing the weekly and annual formal acknowledgment ceremonies to Him. He calls this a profaning of His Sabbaths. All this was taking place in God's Holy City Jerusalem.

MORE CRIMES ENUMERATED

Ezekiel 22:9-12

⁹Slanderous men have been in thee to shed blood; and in thee they have eaten upon the mountains: in the midst of thee they have committed lewdness. ¹⁰In thee have they uncovered their fathers' nakedness; in thee have they humbled her that was unclean in her impurity. ¹¹And one hath committed abomination with his neighbor's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter-in-law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter. ¹²In thee have they taken bribes to shed blood; thou hast taken interest and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbors by oppression, and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

The text moves to condemn the activities of slanderous men. Another translation of the Hebrew word *racheel* is an informer or talebearer. God says that this is prohibited in Leviticus 19:16 and this precipitated Israel's downfall. Israel should have acted in unison all desiring God as they did when they first left Egypt as God led them in the wilderness (Exodus 19:2). Furthermore they ate upon the mountains which is an activity pursuing food sacrificed to idols on the High Places where the idols were worshipped. It was forbidden in the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 19:4). They pursued adultery with their father's wives as did Reuben (Genesis 35:22) and they engaged in sexual immorality with other women who were menstruating. This was forbidden in the Mosaic Law as well in Leviticus 20:18).

THE SINS ENUMERATED

1. Misuse of power of office by shedding blood (Ezekiel 22:6).
2. Contempt for father and mother (Exodus 20:12; Leviticus 19:3).
3. Extortion from the resident alien (Exodus 23:9; Leviticus 19:33–34).
4. Wronging the orphan and the widow (Exodus 22:22).
5. Despising holy things, profaning sabbaths (Exodus 20:8–11).
6. Slander for the purpose of destroying people (Leviticus 19:16).
7. Eating upon the mountains (idolatrous worship, Leviticus 19:4).
8. Committing lewdness uncovering father's nakedness (sex with father's wife; Leviticus 20:11); having sex during wife's menstrual periods (Leviticus 20:18), having sex with a neighbor's wife (Leviticus 20:10), a daughter-in-law (Leviticus 20:12), or a sister or father's daughter (half-sister, Leviticus 20:17).
9. Accepting bribes to shed blood (Deuteronomy 27:25).
10. Taking interest and monetary gain by extortion (Leviticus 25:36).

These violations of the Mosaic Law were particularly heinous to God. They princes did them all and encouraged others in this sins too. The sexual sins were by far those committed in the highest volumes. It did not end there though. They violated the ordaining of a just and fair society which God's Laws engender. Since they had abandoned God and His Laws they were thought they were free to do anything outside of His will. The capstone of all these sins is bribery to insure injustice and the unfair charges to others to trap them in poverty. The city or country whose bribery and its distortion of justice prevail can not be far from God's judgment. These are characteristics which represent leaders desiring control over people in a lust for power. The *nasee* of Israel stole from the population to pay neighboring countries such as Assyria and Egypt to be their military allies. In doing so they denied their best protection in the Lord God of Israel.

THE PROMISE OF DISPERSION

Ezekiel 22:13-16

¹³Behold, therefore, I have smitten my hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee. ¹⁴Can thy heart endure, or can thy hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? I, Jehovah, have spoken it, and will do it. ¹⁵And I will scatter thee among the nations, and disperse thee through the countries; and I will consume thy filthiness out of thee. ¹⁶And thou shalt be profaned in thyself, in the sight of the nations; and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

God claps His hands so to speak together with an indication of the finality of His judgment toward the nation Israel. He cited their stealing and the blood shedding in Jerusalem of the children as the summary reasons for His judgment. In contrast to the other sins whose effects last for a short duration, robbery deprives and continues to harm the people from whom resources have been taken. They lose their ability to live a normal life. A society which condones robbery even through excessive taxation is filled with sin and can expect judgment from God. So God asks them a rhetorical question as to how will they will be able to endure the punishments that are coming. He says, "do you have the courage, will, resolve, and strength to take the punishment that is coming?" The obvious answer is no. This should be a terrifying message to the leaders of any country who knew God, turned away from Him and promoted the sins enumerated here. The end is near when these activities are prevalent.

In their punishment God said that He will scatter the Children of Israel among the nations of the world thereby removing them from their homeland which He gave them. God chose this method of punishment to purge the filthiness out of them. In the depths of their despair over this punishment they would come to know that it was Jehovah God who did all this to them because of their sin. God was not only speaking of the impending Babylonian captivity but the others which were coming in the future too. They would continue to go along this sinful path until they finally cry out to the Lord in faith to come and restore them. After which the Lord Jesus will establish His throne in Jerusalem and begin the Messianic Kingdom.

NEXT MESSAGE: THE DROSS & THE FURNACE

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