

EZEKIEL 6

THE PRESERVATION OF A REMNANT

This prophecy is directed to “the mountains of Israel.” The prophet was directed to set his face toward them. Although the mountains of Israel were high and strong, he must set his face against them; for he had judgments to denounce that would shake their foundation. The mountains of Israel had been holy mountains; but now that they had been polluted with the high places of idolatrous worship, God set His face against them. But from the mountain-tops, the Word of the Lord echoes down to the hills, the rivers, and the valleys; for the whole land is concerned in what was about to be said.

The main message of this prophecy is a threatening of the utter destruction of idols and those who worship them, and this would be done by the sword. God Himself was the Commander-in-chief of this expedition, for it was at His command that the sword of the Babylonians came upon the Israelites. The high places of the idols, which were on the tops of mountains, would be leveled and made desolate; their altars, upon which the people had offered sacrifices and burned incense, would be broken to pieces and laid waste; and the images and idols themselves would be defaced and cut down. It is just and righteous for God to make a desolation of that which we make an idol of, for He will not endure a rival. Those who survived these desolations would learn therefrom and take warning; they would learn to not worship images, and they would be brought to know that Jehovah is God alone.

Taking this chapter as revealing the character of the Lord – in how awful a light is the Divine Being here made to appear! How infinite, for example, are His resources of judgment and penalty! He attributes to Himself the exercise of every possible action of vengeance and humiliation: “I will bring a sword!” “I will destroy your high places!” “I will cast down your slain men!” “I will lay the dead carcasses!” “I will scatter your bones!” “He that is afar off shall die of the pestilence!” “He that is near shall fall by the sword!” The person who remained would die by famine. And thus, in every way, God said, “I will accomplish my fury.” He said that He would stretch out His hand upon the idol-cursed hills and mountains, and upon every green tree and thick oak; and He would make the beautiful land desolate – even more desolate than the wilderness. These are the judgments of the living God! Think of all possible terror, loss, shame, and ruin; and then multiply all these realities and possibilities by an unrestrained imagination – and even then, we have hardly begun to touch the resources of God, when He arises to shake the earth terribly, and to inflict upon the nations

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ *The destruction of idols and their worshipers is threatened – verses 1-7*
- ❖ *A promise of the gracious preservation of a remnant, which will repent and return to the Lord – verses 8-10*
- ❖ *Lamentation over the iniquities and calamities of God’s people – verses 11-14*

the judgments which they have deserved and defied. But behold how there is mercy, even in the terribleness of the revelation! An opportunity for repentance was created by the very awfulness of the method of revelation! Threatenings are intended to lead the way to promises. The thunderstorm is sent to avert us from a way that is wrong, and to drive us to consider our sinful ways. God does not fulminate merely for the sake of showing His greatness; when He makes us afraid, it is only so that He may bring us to final peace! Nothing is more evident than the fact that underneath all these denunciations, there was a sublime moral reason. These judgments came upon the people because they had departed from Him. They had done everything in their power to insult His majesty, and to call into question His holiness and justice; they had worshiped false gods, and defied heaven in all their abominations. And it was not until the cup of their iniquity was full that the last beam of light vanished from the skies, and the whole heaven become darkened with thunderclouds.



Judgment was threatened upon these people; but in verses 8-10, the Lord's mercy triumphed over that judgment. A sad end was made of this provoking people, but not a full end. To the eye of man, the ruin seemed to be universal; and yet the Lord promised to preserve a little remnant, which would be left when the rest perished. They deserved to be cut off with the rest; and they would have been cut off, if God had not poured out His grace and mercy upon them. This remnant is characterized as a repentant remnant (verse 9): "Those who escape of you shall remember me." The Lord allowed them to escape the sword so that they would have time to return to Him. His patience is an encouragement to sinners to repent. But notice how their remembering God was the first step which they took in returning to Him. There begins to be hope for sinners when they enquire, "Where is God my Maker?" Sin takes its rise in forgetting God (Jer. 3:21), but repentance takes its rise from the remembrance of Him and of our obligations to Him. The Lord said, "They shall remember me" – that is, "I will give them grace to do so!" For otherwise, we would have never remembered Him. His redeeming grace shall find sinners, wherever they are; and by bringing God to their mind, it shall bring them to their right mind. The prodigal son, when he remembered his father, remembered how he had sinned against him; and so do all truly repentant persons. Nothing grieves a repenting sinner so much as to know that his or her sin has been a grief to the Lord. Let us not fail to observe these sweet characteristics of God's grace in the hearts of all those who are among His redeemed remnant; for they are the truest evidences of a regenerated heart, and the surest tokens of a soul's real conversion. May the Lord give them to each of us!

Thank You, Lord, for giving us Your grace to remember You; for if You had not done so in our natural state, we never would have given You one thought! Amen.