

EZEKIEL 9

A MARK OF PRESERVATION

The vision that was depicted in chapter 8 was intended to reveal the various workings of that apostate and rebellious spirit which had infected the people of Judah and Jerusalem. And since such a widespread and leprous state of guilt loudly called for the interposition of righteous judgment, the Lord now proceeded to unfold the course of procedure which was to be adopted regarding it. Here in this chapter, the vision continues; and Ezekiel first heard the Lord crying with a loud voice, summoning the officers or overseers of the city into his presence, and ordering each of them to bring his weapon for slaughter. The persons who answered this summons were six in number; but along with these, and in the midst of them – as being the leader of the party – there was one who was different. He was clothed in linen, and he had a writer's inkhorn at his side. The persons involved are called men; but evidently, they are to be regarded as angelic messengers of Jehovah. And they appeared in the character of officers, who had come to execute the judgments of righteousness.

But who is the one Man clothed in linen? None other than the Lord Jesus Himself! His clothing is the same as that of the Levitical high priests, for He is the Great High Priest and Intercessor of His people. The six angels of judgment were subordinate to Him; they accomplished the work of justice only by His command, and under His authority. They were for destruction; but His office is mercy, as He made a mark upon the foreheads of those who were to be spared from the judgment. The writer's inkhorn by His side seems to define His character. Surely Jesus wrote down the names of all His redeemed sons and daughters in the Book of Life, when He first received them from the Father! He Himself said that the power which was given Him over all flesh, as Mediator, was for this express purpose – that He should give eternal life to as many as were given to Him (John 17:2). O precious Redeemer! Bring our souls under Your Divine mark – namely, the sprinkling of Your own blood. Thus, when the destroying angels go forth to execute their awful commission of judgment, we may be found to be like those homes of the Israelites in the midst of Egypt – having the mark of blood upon our doorpost, so that the death-angel may pass over us; and so that we may be secure in our Savior, Who is our Passover Lamb! (Ex. 12:29-30; 1 Cor. 5:7)

The Lord was about to punish the inhabitants of the land; yet even in doing this, He showed the care and faithfulness with which He watched over His own! Christ was here charged to take care for the safety of the small remnant of

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ Preparation is made for the execution of the Lord's judgment – verses 1-3
- ❖ Orders are given to the Man with an inkhorn to mark God's people – verse 4
- ❖ Divine vengeance goes forth upon all who were not thus marked – verses 5-10
- ❖ The report of the Man with the inkhorn, about His success in His work – verse 11



His own faithful ones; for so far from going along with the prevailing tide of evil, they were daily sighing and crying because of the abominations that were being done around them. These persons were to be kept under the shadow of the Almighty, while destruction was sweeping like a whirlwind on every side of them.

So has it always been in the history of God's judgments! The angels who were charged with the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah declared they could do nothing until righteous Lot had made his escape. Nor was the destroying angel sent forth to slay the firstborn in Egypt, until the families of Israel had been given enough time to sprinkle the blood of the Passover lamb upon their doorposts. What a refreshing thought! The Lord remains faithful to the true children of the Covenant, even though they may only be like a few grains of wheat among heaps of chaff that are destined to be blown away to destruction. Let the Lord's sons and daughters, therefore, trust in Him at all times!

The sentence of judgment was speedily executed upon all those who did not have the Savior's mark upon their foreheads. And the orders that were here given to the angels of death very clearly reveal the utter loathing and abhorrence with which the sins of these people had filled the mind of God. The work of slaughter began with the 25 sun-worshippers in front of the sanctuary of the Lord itself. With unsparing severity, the Divine judgment and destruction was to proceed against anyone and everyone who did not have the mark of preservation, whether they were old or young – even against the maidens and little children and women (verse 6). So terrible was the sight, that the prophet himself – for a moment – forgot the assurance that had been given by the Lord's act of marking His preserved remnant! Being overcome by his intense feelings, he falls down and exclaims, "Ah Lord God! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in the pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?" But alas! This cry for mercy had no other effect than the calling forth of a fresh declaration from the Lord, concerning the greatness of the people's guilt, and the necessity of vengeance being executed against it (verses 9-10). And so the judgment was carried out accordingly.

But what a blessed conclusion is found at the end of this chapter! "Behold, the man clothed with linen, which had the inkhorn by his side, reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me!" (verse 11) It is precious indeed to be able to rest assured in the fact that Christ did not fail in even the tiniest loophole; He gloriously succeeded in every detail of the momentous work of redemption that He was tasked to do! He was entirely faithful to the trust that was reposed in Him. Was He not commanded to secure eternal life to all the Lord's chosen remnant? He has done as it was commanded Him! "Of all that thou hast given Me," He said to His Father, "I have lost none!"

Thank You, Lord Jesus, for placing upon our foreheads the mark of Your redeeming grace, which causes us to be spared from Your Divine vengeance! Amen.