

EZEKIEL 11

THE DEATH OF PELATIAH

Another scene of destruction was yet to be displayed before the eye of the prophet, before words of mercy and consolation were uttered in his hearing. But first, his position is changed. The manifested glory of God had fixed its residence at the east gate of the Lord's house (chapter 10:19), the principal entrance to the Temple; and the Holy Spirit lifted the prophet up and placed him at that gate, in the immediate presence of the Divine glory. There, the first thing that met his eye was a group of 25 men, two of whom are expressly named. They were probably singled out because of the peculiar significance of their names, which stood as a contrast against the reality of their lives. One of them was Jaazaniah, which means, "God hears"; and the other was Pelatiah, which means, "God delivers." Such names should have been regarded as perpetual monitors, reminding these men where they ought to have looked for their confidence and safety. If they had only remained steadfast in the Covenant of God, He would surely have heard and helped them in the time of danger. But now, the corruptions which they had introduced among the people, and their insolent contempt of God's authority, had reached such a height that He could no longer refrain from manifesting His righteousness in their punishment. These men had set themselves in direct opposition to the will of God, and given wicked counsel to the people; for they had said, "Let us build houses: this city is the caldron, and we are the flesh" (verse 3). This seems to be a proverbial expression, which may be paraphrased thus: "We are as safe in this city as flesh in a boiling pot; the walls of the city shall be like walls of brass, and shall receive no more damage from the Babylonian besiegers than the caldron does from the fire underneath it. Those who try to force us out of our city and take us into captivity shall find it to be as dangerous as trying to grab the meat out of a boiling pot of water with their bare hands." They looked to the bulwarks of their city as amply sufficient to protect them from all the assaults that could be made against it.

It was impossible for a holy God to permit such presumption to pass unpunished – especially when it came from those who held the highest places of influence in the land. Therefore, the Divine judgment is immediately announced. As One Who was perfectly aware of their vain imaginations and their wicked courses, the Lord declares that He is ready to take vengeance upon their evil inventions. These wicked people would be driven from their imagined safe-haven, and they would be slain by the hands of the heathen in the borders of the land – thus finding a violent death and a polluted grave, as they richly deserved.

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ A message of wrath against the presumptuous people in Jerusalem – verses 1-13
- ❖ A message of comfort to the desponding captives in Babylon – verses 14-21
- ❖ The glory of the Lord departs from Jerusalem – verses 22-23
- ❖ Ezekiel gives his hearers an account of this vision – verses 24-25

As soon as the Lord stated His intention to execute judgment upon these corrupt people, Pelatiah fell down dead! Since his name meant “God delivers,” this was a manifest sign that all hope of a better outcome was now gone; the doom that had been pronounced was sure of taking effect. The prophet immediately perceived the meaning of this sign. Being overwhelmed by the fearful spectacle that now burst upon his view, he fell flat on his face and exclaimed, “Ah! Lord God, wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?” Would the Lord’s judgment be a final and exterminating one?



It was this question that brought out a gleam of hope that still lingered amidst all these dismal proceedings. In that very exile which the people of Jerusalem looked upon with such disdain, the prospect of better days was to begin. Beginning in verse 14, the Lord endeavored to teach Ezekiel that his brethren were no longer those who were dwelling in the physical land of Judah. These people were doomed to destruction for their incorrigible wickedness; and so the Lord would make for Himself a new people, which would be formed for His glory out of the ruined wreck of the apostate Jewish nation. And this new people – raised up from among the prophet’s poor and despised fellow-exiles on the banks of the Chebar River – would be Ezekiel’s true brotherhood – a spiritual nation for the glory of Jehovah’s name.

A great Gospel-principle is made manifest here. The Lord does not choose those who are most highly esteemed among men, or those who outwardly appear to be nearest to the heavenly Kingdom. Rather, His people are comprised of those who are poor and despised in the eyes of the world. A spiritual people, such as the Lord sought, could only be found among the broken hearts of the captivity. After being weaned from their fleshly confidences, and humbled in the dust, and melted in the hot furnace of affliction – then they were in a condition to receive the riches of Divine grace, and to come again to the Lord for His strength and blessing. Even though our own sins may have conducted us into the Lord’s chastisements – yet even there, let us cry to Him; for there is no doubt that He is near to bless us!

As soon as the last words in this vision were uttered, Ezekiel beheld the glory of the Lord – along with His attending cherubim – withdrawing entirely from the Temple in Jerusalem. It left this holy house desolate, and it retired beyond the walls of the city to rest upon the Mount of Olives. Then the prophet was brought back again, in spirit, to the elders who had been sitting before him in his house (chapter 8:1); and he reported to them the details of the vision that had passed before the spiritual eyes of his mind.

Lord, we pray that You would manifest Yourself plainly in the preached Gospel, subdue the hearts of presumptuous sinners under the scepter of Your grace, and build Your Kingdom among the broken hearts of this world! Amen.