

Ezekiel, Son of Man
Class 5 - April 30, 2014
Reading: Ezekiel 12-15

Chapter 16

In Chapter 16 God engages in a graphic description of the spiritual adultery and harlotry of Israel (Jerusalem in particular). Here is a city that was founded by Hittites and Amorites (Exodus 3:17). the passage reference to being found in blood describes a pagan sacrifice or abandonment of a child. God raised this city up, and made it the crown of the land of Israel. It was fashioned into a royal city, and was admired from afar (I Kings 10:1).

Yet this city of God's glory, within whom His temple was situated, turned to idols. He describes a city overwhelmed with idols. He describes how the emblems God gave Israel (possibly the items of worship) (II Kings 16:17. 18:16). God was disgusted that Jerusalem sought out ways to sell herself to false Gods; she even offered to idols her children.

He then describes all of Judah as He will later as a sister of Israel, and a sister of Sodom. His point is that while he destroyed Sodom for immorality, and exiled Israel for unfaithfulness, now Judah has committed even greater unfaithfulness. Thus God, in graphic detail, describes His anger. Could anyone fault God for desiring to utterly destroy Jerusalem? Could anyone fault God for having no mercy left for her?

In the closing part of the chapter, God then tells of a new covenant that He will once more establish with the New Jerusalem. This covenant is also revealed in Jeremiah 31:31 at the same time. Both describe not another version of the Law of Moses, but the covenant of Grace in Christ.

One thing we ought to consider is that God views worship with the same intimacy that He views the intimacy of a husband and a wife. Therefore, when we fail to worship God in a manner pleasing to Him, we have committed a form of adultery.

Chapter 17

In chapter 17 God describes the coming of Nebuchadnezzar. He is called the eagle, a common symbol of nations (and an unclean bird too). The eagle carried off the top of the tree, and it prospered in exile. Yet still the tree rebelled.

Nebuchadnezzar carried away Jehoakin/Jeconiah and installed Zedekiah as king. This first captivity (in which Daniel and Ezekiel were taken) impoverished the land. Those taken would be the ones who flourished, since the remaining people would suffer the blunt of Nebuchadnezzar's wrath.

Too, this promised that King Zedekiah, who was a rebel in every meaning of the word, would be brought to Babylon (although, as we saw several chapter's back, would never "see" Babylon) and be held accountable for his rebellion.

This chapter reflects a strong and hard theme in Ezekiel: Nebuchadnezzar is God's instrument and minister. In Romans 13, we are told that the government is God's minister, and we are not to resist. God spoke through Ezekiel and Jeremiah, and demonstrated through Daniel, that the works of Nebuchadnezzar, as terrible as they were, were the works of God.

Chapter 18

One of the most common false doctrines in almost every denomination today is the doctrine of Original Sin. This doctrine states that when Adam sinned, the guilt of that sin stained the human race. Protestant variations of this doctrine added to it the concept of a Sinful Nature, and the impossibility therefore of man to please or seek God of his own volition.

It is clear that men in the days of Ezekiel held a similar idea. The proverb that was passed around was "fathers eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge". Thus in a limited sense, they believed they were being punished by God for their father's sins. In a broader sense, it declared the same concept as original sin: God holds guilty sons for their father's sin.

Let us be clear: God was offended by this proverb. He in clear and concise terms and examples ordered Ezekiel to tell the people that God is undeniably fair: He only punishes people for the sins they are guilty of.

It may seem confusing to some then why we all die, when it was Adam who sinned. Yet we should understand that while we do not suffer the wages of that sin (eternal death), we do suffer the consequences of that sin (physical death). It is the case that many suffer the consequences of the sins of a few, and sometimes not even the sinner suffers consequences of their sins. Yet God is precise in according the wages of sin on the guilty sinner.

No chapter in the Bible better debunks the idea of original sin than Ezekiel 18.