

Ezekiel, Son of Man

Class 7 - May 14, 2014

Reading: Ezekiel 23-25

Chapter 23

This parable of two wives is a restatement of the vision of Ezekiel 16:46. Again, God compares Israel and Judah (Samaria and Jerusalem) to two sisters, Ohalah and Oholibah ("her tent" and "my tent is in her"). Once again, the language is very coarse and graphic to depict the depth of the unfaithfulness of these nations to God.

Throughout their history, Israel and Judah chased after the nations instead of God. Solomon made alliances with Egypt (I Kings 3:1, 10:28) as well as with the Phoenicians (I Kings 5:12). Israel allied itself with Judah made peace through Jehoshaphat with Israel (I Kings 22:44). Hezekiah made overtures to the Babylonians, and often in Ezekiel and Jeremiah's time treaties were sought with Egypt. Such "ecumenicalism" was adulterous to God.

We need to again feel the personal anger God has for sin. We tend to disassociate sin from a personal consequence; if it does not hurt anyone in our perception, we believe it is not wrong. Yet sin is quite painful to God, and a personal sin against Him. IF the graphic nature of this adultery were put upon us, who would not be driven to wrath or indignation?

NEVER take sin lightly.

Chapter 24

In January of 589 BC, king Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem because of the rebellion of king Zedekiah. Zedekiah had arranged a treaty with Egypt for protection from Babylon. This siege is recorded in Kings:

2 Kings 25:1 Now in the ninth year of his reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, camped against it and built a siege wall all around it.

According to historical records, Pharaoh *Hophra* / *Apries* sent a force to defend Jerusalem in the first year of the siege, but this force was immediately destroyed. Thus, the promised protection of the Egyptians never materialized ¹.

God directs Ezekiel to make another visual representation of the battle. It begins with a pot of food. In this pot all of the choice cuts are placed. Once cooked, he would remove the meat and broth, and then place it back in the fire to scorch or burn clean the residue left.

The people of Jerusalem likened themselves to being protected in a pot in earlier chapters:

Ezekiel 11:3 who say, 'Is not the time near to build houses? This city is the pot and we are the flesh.'

¹ Clayton, Peter A. Chronicle of the Pharaohs: The Reign-by-Reign Record of the Rulers and Dynasties of Ancient Egypt. Thames & Hudson., 2006. p.195

Yet they were not the meant; God had already removed the "choice meat" from Jerusalem. What was left was the scum meant to be incinerated. God uses their own words against them.

But it is the second part of the chapter that leaves us shocked. God tells Ezekiel that He will strike the "desire of your eyes". That night, Ezekiel's wife dies.

Here we see the pinnacle of the suffering of Ezekiel. Of all of the great burdens he would bear to bring for the "burden of the word of the Lord", this one is supreme. Yet the command to accompany this burden makes it even worse: Ezekiel cannot grieve. He cannot show any sorrow.

The point is this: God is about to strike down His own "desire of His eyes". Jehovah says " I will not relent, and I will not pity and I will not be sorry". When Ezekiel bears this burden, the people are astonished, and demand an explanation.

It is a hard thing to be a prophet of the Lord.

Chapter 25

Once more Ezekiel speaks against the Ammonites. God's anger is that they rejoiced when Judah was besieged. This same claim is made against Edom by the prophet Obadiah.

A lesson is here for the Godly. We are not to rejoice with the affliction or punishment of the guilty. Job spoke to this in Job 31:29-30. God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 18:23). It may be that we desire justice, but we must desire mercy more, and we cannot rejoice when justice overtakes mercy.

Ammon was a place that had a special protection from God.

Deuteronomy 2:19 'And when you come opposite the sons of Ammon, do not harass them nor provoke them, for I will not give you any of the land of the sons of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the sons of Lot as a possession.'

The Moabites are a partner nation to Ammon, coming from the same founder (Lot). They too are accused of mocking Judah in her judgment.

Deuteronomy 2:9 "Then the LORD said to me, 'Do not harass Moab, nor provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of their land as a possession, because I have given Ar to the sons of Lot as a possession.

God also brings Edom into the picture for the same sins. In addition, in chapter 35 it will be suggested that Edom aided Judah's destruction with Babylon. In some manner we are told they sought vengeance, perhaps by taking something they believed their own (Edom had been subservient to Israel per 2 Samuel 8:2 until 2 Kings 1:1). Edom too had a special place and possession by God, and they were called "brother" to Israel:

Deuteronomy 23:7 "You shall not detest an Edomite, for he is your brother; you shall not detest an Egyptian, because you were an alien in his land."

Finally, the Philistines are addressed for their vengeance against Judah. While they do not share the same blessings these other nations had, they are still being judged for their work against Judah. When the Assyrians besieged Judah under King Ahaz, the Philistines seized a number of provinces. (2 Chronicles 28:18). This curse may have in mind this event; if so, it demonstrate that God is patience in exacting judgment, a fact we are told repeatedly in the Bible.