

Ezekiel Chapter 14

Ezekiel 14:1 "Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me."

This is the beginning of a new prophecy. These elders were those who had been trained in the Word of God. It appears, they have heard the other prophecies, and are inquiring of Ezekiel about themselves.

These leaders came insincerely seeking God's counsel, as God reveals to the prophet, who thus saw through their facade and indicted them for determining to pursue their evil way and defy God's will. They had set up their idols in their hearts. Their idolatry, unlike that back in Jerusalem, was internal.

Ezekiel 14:2 "And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,"

One thing that we could take advice from, is the fact that Ezekiel speaks just what God puts in His mouth.

Ezekiel 14:3 "Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?"

The heart reveals what we really are. It is the center of our being. Man is either lost, or saved by what is in his heart. Even though the idols have been burned, they still think of them with fond memories. God is saying, if they still have these idols in their hearts, why do not they consult them, and not Me? An idol does not have to be one you can see with your eyes. Anything, or anyone, that you put above God in your heart, is an idol. Their hearts are not stayed upon God.

Ezekiel 14:4 "Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;"

Sin does not have to be physically carried out, for it to be sin. The heart of man will be judged. Jesus said in Matthew:

Matthew 5:28 "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

These elders have committed sin in their hearts, because in their hearts, they still worshipped idols. True worship takes place in the heart. To replace worship of God with idols, is to separate oneself from God. To even think of worshipping God, while we still have thoughts of idols in our hearts, is impossible as well. God will not share His people with anyone, or anything else. You cannot worship God and idols at the same time.

They received no verbal answer, but an answer directly from the Lord in the action of judgment.

Ezekiel 14:5 "That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols."

Their idolatry had brought this captivity upon them. "Estranged", in this verse, means to be a foreigner, or to turn aside. They have turned away from God in their hearts. The double-minded person is not acceptable to God.

Ezekiel 14:6 "Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn [yourselves] from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations."

This is speaking to all of the people, including these elders. Notice, this is to the entire house of Israel, not just these elders. Look, at the word "[yourselves]".

The Lord answered the two-faced inquiry in only one way, by a call to repent. The seekers were turned away from Him to idols, and He must be turned away from them.

We see that the decision to worship, or not worship God is an individual thing. Each person decides in his own heart to turn away from his abominations to the Living God. Just as John the Baptist, preached repent, that is the message here also. God will forgive. The individual must repent, and then God will come and dwell with him again.

Ezekiel 14:7 "For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me; I the LORD will answer him by myself:"

"Every one" leaves no doubt that this is an individual thing. Notice also, that this is not just the Hebrews, but the strangers as well. Another word for stranger would be Gentile. "Sojourneth", means temporarily dwells. Those who deliberately turn from God to idols, will someday stand before the Judge of all the world and be found guilty. God deals with this Himself. This does not have to be an open act of idolatry. The heart is judged.

In the following Scripture, we see Jesus speaking of this very thing on judgment day.

Matthew 7:22-23 "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

You see, their outward action was alright, but God judges the heart. Their hearts were not acceptable.

Ezekiel 14:8 "And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I [am] the LORD."

God is not interested in our outward show of faith. He judges the heart. God will turn His face from one who does not retain Him in his heart. That man will be judged of God, and used to show others the error of this. Only God knows the heart of man. There will be no question, this judgment is of God.

Ezekiel 14:9 "And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the LORD have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel."

There were false prophets in the land. God had judged their hearts and found them guilty of worshipping idols in their hearts. God causes them to believe a lie, because they are not faithful to Him. God builds up whoever He will, and He destroys whoever He will. His judgment is just. It is God who removes prophets, as it is God who builds up prophets.

God will deceive a false prophet only in a qualified sense. When one willfully rejects His Word, He places a resulting cloud of darkness, or permits it to continue, hiding the truth so that the person is deceived by his own obstinate self will.

This fits with the same principle as when God gives up Israel to evil statutes, counsel that they insist on as they spurn His Word. When people refuse the truth, He lets them seek after their own inclinations and gives them over to falsehood. This is the wrath of abandonment (noted in Romans 1:18).

Ezekiel 14:10 "And they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity: the punishment of the prophet shall be even as the punishment of him that seeketh [unto him];"

There is a responsibility for those listening to prophets, to determine whether they be of God, or not. To follow a false prophet, brings the follower the same punishment as the false prophet.

1 John 4:1 "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

Ezekiel 14:11 "That the house of Israel may go no more astray from me, neither be polluted any more with all their transgressions; but that they may be my people, and I may be their God, saith the Lord GOD."

This is a continuation (of verse 10).

Every punishment that God brings on this earth, is to cause those who are living in sin to repent. The desire of God is to be their God. He will not force Himself upon them. They must choose to be His people, and then He will be their God.

Ezekiel 14:12 "The word of the LORD came again to me, saying,"

This shows another break in the prophecy here.

Ezekiel 14:13 "Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it:"

God is speaking to Ezekiel here. Son of man, is a name by which God calls Ezekiel. We see that famine is one way that God brings punishment on an unrepentant society. Much of the famine in our society today is in areas where they worship false gods, or no God at all.

Ezekiel 14:14 "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver [but] their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD."

The three mentioned above, were spoken of by God as being righteous in His sight. They lived in a society that was far away from God. The situation in Judah is so desperate that even if three of the most righteous men in the history of God's people were to intercede, they would be able to save only themselves.

Noah preached to the people around him, the many years he was building the ark, but no one listened and repented.

God saved Noah, his wife, his three sons, and their three wives. Noah was not saved from the flood, he was saved in the flood.

Daniel was saved in the lion's den, not from it.

Job was saved in the presence of his friends who did not believe. God may not remove you from your problem, but He will protect you in the problem, if you stay in right standing with Him.

This scripture illustrates that even the presence and prayers of the godly could not stop the coming judgment. (Genesis 18:22-32 and Jer. 5:1-4), provides rare exceptions to the principle that one man's righteousness is no protection for others.

Ezekiel 14:15 "If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the beasts:"

The noisome beasts would be for punishment of those living in sin. The problem will be there, but God will protect His own in the midst of the problem. Remember the one who held the inkhorn and the other 5 who were to mark certain ones we studied previously.

Ezekiel 14:16 " [Though] these three men [were] in it, [as] I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate."

This is explaining the individuality of salvation. Just because you are righteous in God's sight, does not mean your children are. God judges on an individual basis. You repent and live for God to save your own soul. The land is desolate in punishment for sin. God will protect His own, even in a famine.

Ezekiel 14:17 "Or [if] I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off man and beast from it:"

This is another form of punishment that God brings upon those who have turned against Him. Those who truly love God may be in the land when these problems come, but they will not be killed by the sword. A thousand may fall at their side, but they will be protected by God.

Ezekiel 14:18 "Though these three men [were] in it, [as] I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they only shall be delivered themselves."

This is just saying that God does not have grandchildren, just children. These, sons and daughters, must decide for themselves to follow God. Each generation is judged on its own merits.

Ezekiel 14:19 "Or [if] I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast:"

Again, this is speaking of a different type of judgment that might come into the land, because of the sin. I cannot say enough, this is not from Satan. This is from God, against a rebellious family.

Ezekiel 14:20 "Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, [were] in it, [as] I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall [but] deliver their own souls by their righteousness."

Noah, Daniel, and Job were three righteous men who lived in the same land with very evil people. This just explains, again, that their righteousness would not save their children. Only the children's righteousness could save them. Each person is responsible for his own sin.

3 people come to mind here, Seth, Ham and Japheth.

Genesis 9:18 "And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham [is] the father of Canaan."

Genesis 10:6 "And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan."

Both Cush and Phut are mentioned as major players in the end time prophecies as those who will come against Israel.

Ezekiel 14:21 "For thus saith the Lord GOD; How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast?"

God sends these four judgments upon all the people who have committed spiritual adultery in their hearts, by worshipping false gods. The chastisement of God is great in these 4 judgments, but the sin was just as great. God fits the punishment to the sin.

Ezekiel 14:22 "Yet, behold, therein shall be left a remnant that shall be brought forth, [both] sons and daughters: behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way and their doings: and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, [even] concerning all that I have brought upon it."

God always saved a remnant of His people. These are they who have not bowed their knees to false gods. The beautiful thing in all of this is the fact that God does not group everyone together. Those who live for Him will be saved, even though everyone around them is lost. God never overlooks a single person who loves Him.

1 Corinthians 8:3 "But if any man love God, the same is known of him."

God's judgment on Jerusalem was just. His saving of the remnant was just, as well.

Ezekiel 14:23 "And they shall comfort you, when ye see their ways and their doings: and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord GOD."

The comfort is in the knowledge of the remnant saved, who will return to Jerusalem later. There has been a separation of the evil from the good in the judgments of God. God is loving and kind, but He is also just. His cause was holy, and therefore we do not always understand.

An ungodly Jerusalem remnant, brought as captives to join exiled Jews in Babylon, was to be very wicked. Exiles already there, repulsed by this evil, were to realize God's justness in His severe judgment on Jerusalem.

Ezekiel Chapter 14 Questions

1. Who were the elders of verse 1?
2. The heart reveals what we _____.
3. Where had these men set up their idols?
4. What can be an idol to you?
5. What does the word "estranged" mean?
6. Their _____ had brought this captivity upon them.
7. What did God tell them to do in verse 6?
8. The decision to follow God, or not, is an _____ thing.
9. What does the words "every one" leave no doubt about?

10. The strangers were _____.
11. What does "sojourneth" mean?
12. The man God sets His face against will be a _____ and a _____.
13. Who deceives the false prophet?
14. Why did God cause them to believe a lie?
15. What responsibility does the one listening to a prophet have?
16. What is every punishment that God brings on the earth for?
17. God desires to be their _____.
18. What punishment does God bring, mentioned in verse 13?
19. What 3 men, righteous in God's sight, were mentioned in verse 14?
20. Noah was not saved from the flood, he was saved _____ it.
21. Daniel was saved _____.
22. Job was saved in the presence of his friends, who _____.
23. Who can a person save by believing in God?
24. What is verse 18 saying?
25. Who brings the punishment for their sins?
26. How many judgments did God send on Jerusalem?
27. These judgments came on the people who had committed _____.
28. God will save a _____.
29. What is their comfort in?