

Ezekiel Chapter 22

Ezekiel 22:1-2 "Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying," "Now, thou son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge the bloody city? yea, thou shalt show her all her abominations."

This is the beginning of another prophecy.

The bloody city is speaking of Jerusalem. Ezekiel is to speak the judgment upon her. This is saying that Ezekiel is to specifically mention her revolting sins to her such as her judicial murders, her sacrifice of children, and her rebellion against Babylon.

Why, because of her rebellion against Babylon? The answer was because God told them through Ezekiel that they should go into captivity, but they would not listen but preferred to listen to their false prophets and leaders.

Ezekiel 22:3 "Then say thou, Thus saith the Lord GOD, The city sheddeth blood in the midst of it, that her time may come, and maketh idols against herself to defile herself."

Isaiah and Jeremiah had said similar things about Jerusalem. The uppermost sin is the making of these idols, and worshipping false gods.

Verses 4-13: We see that at least 17 kinds of sin appear in the indictment of Jerusalem's blood guiltiness (and more in verses 25-29).

The only restraint on their evil was their ability. They did all the evil they could, and shedding blood seemed to be the most popular.

Ezekiel 22:4 "Thou art become guilty in thy blood that thou hast shed; and hast defiled thyself in thine idols which thou hast made; and thou hast caused thy days to draw near, and art come [even] unto thy years: therefore have I made thee a reproach unto the heathen, and a mocking to all countries."

Their terrible sins have brought the destruction about, even sooner than it would have come. The more they worshiped false gods, the angrier God became. The angrier He got, the sooner the punishment came. They have come to the end of God's patience. He has judged them guilty and deserving death.

The heathen around them that had such great awe of them and their God are now thinking of them in a degrading way. They have no respect for them. This lack of respect is because they are so evil. Their God has turned against them.

Ezekiel 22:5 "[Those that be] near, and [those that be] far from thee, shall mock thee, [which art] infamous [and] much vexed."

This is speaking of the cities that began to speak badly about Jerusalem. They were famous, now they are infamous. They would not be so brave to say these things, if it had not become apparent to everyone that God had left them.

Romans 2:24 tells us "For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, as it is written."

Ezekiel 22:6 "Behold, the princes of Israel, every one were in thee to their power to shed blood."

The princes that were so well known for the blood they had shed were Jehoiakim and Manasseh. Of course, all of those who were evil were included in this. There were very few recent kings who had pleased God.

Ezekiel 22:7 "In thee have they set light by father and mother: in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger: in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow."

We now see some of the things that God had against them, other than the fact that they worshipped false gods, and caused the people to do the same. God had always protected the fatherless and the widow. This was a sin He would not overlook.

Ezekiel 22:8 "Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths."

This speaks of their disrespect for the temple, and things in the temple. They had not felt a need to keep the Sabbath holy, as well.

Ezekiel 22:9 "In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains: in the midst of thee they commit lewdness."

We see the widespread sins they have committed. This mountain worship, many times, included promiscuous sex. That is what is meant by the "lewdness". It seems, they were talebearers, and not necessarily carrying the truth.

This meant idol worship which the passage clarifies (in verse 4), i.e., eating meals at idol shrines, accompanied by sexual sins, such as those described (in verses 10-11).

Ezekiel 22:10 "In thee have they discovered their fathers' nakedness: in thee have they humbled her that was set apart for pollution."

This is speaking of incest, and even homosexuality; Members of a family committing sexual sin among themselves. They generally shaved the head of an adulterous woman, if they did not stone her to death.

This is speaking of many committing this sinful act with an adulterous woman. These very same sins are very prevalent in our society today. God will not always overlook such sin.

Ezekiel 22:11 "And one hath committed abomination with his neighbor's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter in law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter."

This type of sexual act (incest), is strictly forbidden in God's law. To sleep with all these people, was strictly forbidden.

Ezekiel 22:12 "In thee have they taken gifts to shed blood; thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbors by extortion, and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord GOD."

The first mention here, is of a hired killer. Taken gifts could mean bribes which are mentioned in other scriptures. The other sins are taking great advantage of those less fortunate than themselves. This is like they have gone through the ordinances in Leviticus against these sins, and then, have committed every one of them. This is total rebellion against God and His teachings.

Ezekiel 22:13 "Behold, therefore I have smitten mine hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee."

God will not bless a people who are committing these sins. God has struck out at (smitten), those who gain in these ways.

Verses 14-16: Ezekiel saw not only the punishment in the immediate future, but the worldwide dispersion of the Jews still going on today, which continues for the purging of Israel's sins.

Ezekiel 22:14 "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? I the LORD have spoken [it], and will do [it]."

God will pour out His fire of chastisement on them to cleanse them from this filthiness. He will leave a remnant, however. We see that God never totally destroys Israel, as He did the Ammonites.

Ezekiel 22:15 "And I will scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse thee in the countries, and will consume thy filthiness out of thee."

This entire captivity of the Israelites was to cleanse them from their sins. As we read in a previous lesson, was that the majority of the Jews were marked for death and were killed as we read (in chapter 9), of the five with the slaughter weapons and of the one who carried the inkhorn for those who would be saved from death.

The only time when some seemed to repent and turn to God, was when they were in dire circumstances.

Ezekiel 22:16 "And thou shalt take thine inheritance in thyself in the sight of the heathen, and thou shalt know that I [am] the LORD."

The land and the wealth in that land are gone. The only thing they will have is their flesh. All of this is to show His people that there is no other god. He is the LORD, He is God. The only help they have, or for that matter, any of us have, is in the LORD.

After the defiling dispersion, when the sin has been purged, Israel will come to know the Lord. Many Jews do know Him now, but the nation will be saved in the future (Zech. 12-14; Rom. 11: 25-27).

Verses 17-22, this is picturing God's judgment of Jerusalem as a smelting furnace which burns away dross and impurities, resulting in purified metal.

His wrath was the fire (verse 21); an apt term for Babylon's fiery destruction of the city. And His people were to be refined (verse 20), with the sinful ones removed. Even in the ultimate day, God will follow this principle in purging His creation of sin.

Ezekiel 22:17-18 "And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying," "Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they [are] brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are [even] the dross of silver."

There is a break in the prophecy here, for a new thought.

When you heat gold or silver, the dross comes to the top and is skimmed off and thrown away. Sometimes, the alloy in silver, or gold, is brass, tin, iron, or lead. This is saying then that these Israelites are no longer "silver" (redeemed). They are the cast away "brass" (judgment). God has judged them, and found them not to be pure.

"Silver" means redemption. It is a beautiful, white metal. They have tarnished that silver, and are now baser metal, of not much value. Most of the base metals mentioned above are hardeners. They certainly have become hard, and in effect, of no use to God. They had pretended to be right with God, because they looked like silver. When the heat was applied, it was apparent they were of a base metal, or dross.

Ezekiel 22:19 "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem."

Dross is generally skimmed off the silver and thrown away. In a sense, that is what God has done here. He has cast them away. God will deal with the dross (Israel), in His own way.

The science of metallurgy was well developed in the days of Ezekiel, and the imagery used here was clear to his listeners. Israel had become like dross, the worthless residue left over when metals have been purified. Yet the Lord would melt even this dross, a symbol of the completeness and finality of His judgment.

Ezekiel 22:20 "[As] they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt [it]; so will I gather [you] in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave [you there], and melt you."

This is the same thing that Jesus speaks of about separating the wheat from the chaff. They are mixed up together, and sometimes it is hard to tell which is which. The heat will separate them. God is saying, He will separate the evil from those that are to be saved.

Ezekiel 22:21 "Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof."

It takes 2200 degrees of heat to melt silver. We see then, the heat will be very intense. This judgment God brings is a severe judgment. He must separate those of pure silver from the dross.

Ezekiel 22:22 "As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the LORD have poured out my fury upon you."

We must look back to another lesson, where we learned that the problems from the judgment came on the just and the unjust. The heat is applied on all. The silver just becomes purer with the heat. The dross is destroyed. This is what happens to people. When the troubles come, those of God become more pure with the testing.

Those not of God are exposed and done away with. This is the LORD who poured out His fury. It is the LORD who separates.

The rest of this chapter is a veritable catalog of the nation's sins and every guilty party is singled out for judgment. The false prophets who have devoured souls (verse 25); the priests who have violated my law (verse 26); the princes who are like wolves ravaging the prey (verse 27); and the people who have used oppression and exercised robbery (verse 29).

No one will be left out of the judgment. In one of the saddest verses in the book, the Lord Himself confesses that He found no one who could stand in the gap, to stem the tide that would inevitably bring destruction (verse 30).

Ezekiel 22:23-24 "And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying," "Son of man, say unto her, Thou [art] the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation."

We see another momentary break with this new statement.

Here, in this particular instance, is the city of Jerusalem and the land of Israel. Now we see one of the reasons for the famine. It has not rained to cause a crop to grow, during the duration of God's indignation.

Verses 25-29: Here is the word “conspiracy”. The whole nation was wicked. First, all leaders are indicted for their vicious sin: prophets, priest, princes, and then the people in general.

Ezekiel 22:25 "[There is] a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravaging the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof."

The false prophets were prophets for money. They had no regard for God, His temple, His ways, or His people. They were self-made prophets, because it was profitable to them. The roaring of the lion is sometimes associated with Satan. He goes through the earth, as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may destroy.

These false prophets are doing the same thing. They prophesy lies and do it loudly, so everyone can hear.

Ezekiel 22:26 "Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed [difference] between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them."

In an earlier lesson, we remember the priests and elders had idols in their private quarters in the temple area. They had turned from the worship of the one true God, to idols and worship of false gods. The terrible thing is that they are leaders, and they lead others into this worship of false gods.

There is one 2 word phrase that covers this perfectly, “Spiritual Compromise”. They had spiritually compromised God, and thought of the false gods on an equal basis with God. They had done exactly what many of our churches of today have done. They have brought the world into the church. The temple was to be holy, and set aside for the purposes of God alone.

Ezekiel 22:27 "Her princes in the midst thereof [are] like wolves ravaging the prey, to shed blood, [and] to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain."

The society, all of this describes, is far too similar to our society for me. I am very uncomfortable, when I read of the leaders compromising for selfish gain. The princes were their leaders in government. They destroy the people to get what they want.

Ezekiel 22:28 "And her prophets have daubed them with untempered [mortar], seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken."

The prophets are not building a solid wall of separation from this worldliness. They are just daubing at fixing the problems. They are really looking to the world and false gods for answers. The only real Truth is in God and in His Word. These prophets, getting their messages from the world, are pretending their messages are from God. God will not compromise with the world. These messages of compromise are not from Him.

Ezekiel 22:29 "The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully."

This states that not only have the political leaders and the religious leaders been caught up in greed, but the common people as well. They cheat each other to satisfy their greed. They have no compassion on those in need. They think only of themselves.

Ezekiel 22:30 "And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none."

We see something, here, similar to Sodom and Gomorrah. God could not find 10 righteous there, so He destroyed them. We see that in Israel, there was not even one who was righteous enough to intercede before God for them. There was no one holy enough to stand in the gap for them. The only possible result of this is that God will destroy the land.

Perhaps, this is why a few years later God sent Jesus to the earth to be our substitute. The depravity of man is an on-going thing. We all deserve to die for our sins. Praise God! Jesus paid our penalty of death for us.

Ezekiel and Jeremiah were faithful, but apart from them God sought a man capable of advocacy for Israel when its sin had gone so far. But no one could lead the people to repentance and draw the nation back from the brink of the judgment that came in 586 B.C.

Only God's Messiah, God Himself, will have the character and the credentials sufficient to do what no man can do, intercede for Israel.

He was rejected by them in His earthly ministry, so the effects of this judgment continue today, until they turn to Him in faith (Zech. 12:10 - 13:1).

Ezekiel 22:31 "Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD."

God had no choice. He had to punish them. They brought this terrible judgment on themselves. To be just, God had to destroy them. His mercy kept a remnant alive to begin again. All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). God's grace saved some.

Ezekiel Chapter 22 Questions

1. What is the bloody city in verse 2?
2. What is Ezekiel to specifically mention to her?
3. What other prophets had said similar things about Jerusalem?
4. What had their terrible sins done?
5. They have come to the end of God's _____.
6. The heathen had lost _____ for them.
7. Who were the princes in verse 6 speaking of probably.
8. What was mentioned as a sin they committed in verse 7?
9. What is verse 8 speaking of?
10. What was part of the very sinful mountain worship?
11. Verse 10 is speaking of _____ and _____.
12. What generally happened to an adulterous woman?
13. What were the sins mentioned in verse 11 that God strictly forbids?
14. What is the very first thing in verse 12 speaking of?
15. How had they greedily gained from their neighbors?
16. God will pour out His fire on them in way of _____.
17. Will He destroy them all?
18. Their land and wealth is gone, the only thing they have left is _____.
19. What should the chastisement show them, and in fact, everyone?
20. What is dross?
21. What metals are classified as dross?
22. What happens to the dross, when extreme heat is put on silver?
23. What does "silver" mean?
24. What does "brass" symbolize?
25. They looked like silver, which meant what?

26. What happened to them, that was similar to what happens to dross?
27. What verse is speaking of the same thing as Jesus separating the wheat from the chaff?
28. How many degrees does it take to melt silver?
29. The problems come on the _____ and the _____.
30. What was the reason for the famine?
31. The false prophets were prophets for _____.
32. Who is associated with the roaring of the lion?
33. What sin had the priests and elders committed?
34. This society then, reminds the author of whom?
35. How many men could God find to stand in the gap for them?