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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Ezekiel 22.

(2014)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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Ezekiel 22.

(A brief overview of the main topics).

Topics.

- Jerusalem has made Idols in her city.
- Sins in the city of Jerusalem.
- The LORD will strike His hand against Jerusalem.
- The House of Israel has become dross to the LORD.
- Jerusalem's prophets are like roaring lions tearing their prey.
- Jerusalem's priests are men of violence.
- Jerusalem's leaders are like wolves tearing their prey.
- The LORD sought for a righteous man.

Introduction to the Book of Ezekiel: Ezekiel, a prophet and priest, was exiled to Babylon in 597 B.C. His ministry extended over at least twenty-three years. The book opens with his first dramatic vision of the "likeness" of the LORD". Ezekiel was keenly aware of God's presence and power in human affairs. He addressed both the exiles and the people left in Judah with messages of warning and judgment, predicting the fall of Jerusalem.

After its fall (586), Ezekiel prophesied of hope and reassurance for the people of Judah, who had then lost the focus of God's covenant and the temple in Jerusalem. His vision of the valley of dry bones (ch. 37) is a classic picture of God's ability to breathe new life into those who are spiritually dead. Ezekiel is prophesying about the Jews that did not go into captivity to Babylon, but remained against the word of the LORD in Jerusalem.

NOTE: Ezekiel's message is primarily directed to the people in the land of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem (the two tribes), but often it is difficult to separate the message from Judah and Israel (the ten tribes) because much of what the LORD says can be applied to both Judah and Israel because the two are so intertwined and both nations were guilty of the same gross sins.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

Introduction: at this time Ezekiel has been in captivity to Babylon seven years (Ezekiel 20:1).

Jerusalem has made Idols in Her City.

Ezekiel 22:1-4 ----- ¹And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ²"And you, son of man, will you judge, will you judge the bloody city? Then declare to her all her abominations. ³You shall say, Thus says the Lord GOD: A city that sheds blood in her midst, so that her time may come, and that makes idols to defile herself! ⁴You have become guilty by the blood that you have shed, and defiled by the idols that you have made, and you have brought your days near, the appointed time of your years has come. Therefore I have made you a reproach to the nations, and a mockery to all the countries.

How tragic is this, the inhabitants of Jerusalem (the city of God) are so wicked the LORD calls the city a city of blood and idols.

The appointed time of Jerusalem's years has come: at this time Ezekiel has been in captivity to Babylon seven years (Ezek. 20:1), Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon approximately ten years after Ezekiel was taken into captivity so Jerusalem's appointed time for judgment is only three years away.

Sins in the City of Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 22:5-12 ----- ⁵Those who are near and those who are far from you will mock you (Jerusalem); your name is defiled; you are full of tumult. ⁶"Behold, the princes of Israel in you, every one according to his power, have been bent on shedding blood. ⁷Father and mother are treated with contempt in you; the sojourner suffers extortion in your midst; the fatherless and the widow are wronged in you. ⁸You have despised my holy things and profaned my Sabbaths. ⁹There are men in you who slander to shed blood, and people in you who eat on the mountains; they commit lewdness in your midst. ¹⁰In you men uncover their fathers' nakedness; in you they violate women who are unclean in their menstrual impurity. ¹¹One commits abomination with his neighbor's wife; another lewdly defiles his daughter-in-law; another in you violates his sister, his father's daughter. ¹²In you they take bribes to shed blood; you take interest and profit and make gain of your neighbors by extortion; but me you have forgotten, declares the Lord GOD.

Sins in the city of Jerusalem.

- The princes (officials and leaders) of Israel are bent on shedding blood.
- Father and mothers are treated with contempt and travellers are extorted.
- The fatherless and the widow are wronged.
- The LORD'S Holy things are despised and regarded with contempt.
- The Sabbaths are profaned and treated with irreverence and disrespect.
- Men entice others to shed blood.
- People who worship idols on the mountains commit lewdness in Jerusalem.
- Women in their menstrual impurity are sexually violated.
- Men are having sex with another's man's wife and their daughter-in-law.
- Brothers are having sex with their sisters.
- People are taking bribes to kill others (we would call them hit men).
- They charge interest and make a profit of their neighbours by extortion
- The people have forgotten the LORD.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem by their wicked behaviour have defiled the name of Jerusalem and by extension the name of God, which results in the surrounding nations mocking and despising the city of Jerusalem.

The lesson for today: the behaviour of everyone who confesses the name of God and Christ His Son will determine to some extent whether outsiders are drawn to God or to despise Him. We are not witnesses to the Lord only when we are sharing our faith with another person our entire life is a witness to our faith it can be a good witness or a bad testimony.

The LORD will Strike His hand against Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 22:13-16 ----- ¹³Behold, I strike my hand at the dishonest gain that you have made, and at the blood that has been in your midst. ¹⁴Can your courage endure, or can your hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with you? I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it. ¹⁵I will scatter you

among the nations and disperse you through the countries, and I will consume your uncleanness out of you. ¹⁶And you shall be profaned by your own doing in the sight of the nations, and you shall know that I am the LORD."

The LORD will scatter the inhabitants of Jerusalem throughout the surrounding nations and countries and cleanse them of their idols foreign gods and wicked ways.

The master potter: The LORD masterfully achieved this while Israel was in Babylonian captivity for seventy years. God moulded them like a master potter moulds a beautiful clay jar. Judah and Israel went into Babylon as two unfaithful nations that had turned away from the LORD to idols and other gods. Seventy years later, Cyrus (King of Persia) who the LORD called His Shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) gave permission to Israel to return to Jerusalem. Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel back to their beloved City Jerusalem as one nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Israel never turned to pagan gods again).

NOTICE: Judah will be treated with disrespect, mocked and scorned by the surrounding nations, but they have brought it on themselves by their own sinful behaviour and the wicked way they have treated others.

The House of Israel has become Dross to the LORD.

Ezekiel 22:17-22 ----- ¹⁷And the word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁸"Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to me; all of them are bronze and tin and iron and lead in the furnace; they are dross of silver. ¹⁹Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Because you have all become dross, therefore, behold, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. ²⁰As one gathers silver and bronze and iron and lead and tin into a furnace, to blow the fire on it in order to melt it, so I will gather you in my anger and in my wrath, and I will put you in and melt you. ²¹I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of my wrath, and you shall be melted in the midst of it. ²²As silver is melted in a furnace, so you shall be melted in the midst of it, and you shall know that I am the LORD; I have poured out my wrath upon you."

Dross: refers to something that is worthless and of a low standard and quality, in this context carries the idea turning back, to apostatize meaning to renounce a religious faith or a moral set of principles. The dross of silver is thrown away it is worthless and has no use for anything which means that the LORD is basically calling the inhabitants of Jerusalem worthless and unfit for even the lowliest task.

Bronze tin iron and lead: the inhabitants of Jerusalem are likened to bronze tin iron and lead that is put in a furnace and melted so that all impurities (dross) are burned off and only the pure metal remains.

A Fabulous Parable.

To burn the impurities (dross) out of metals the furnace needs extreme heat. To increase the heat of a furnace it needs extra oxygen blown into the fire. The LORD in this parable is pictured as being the one who is blowing the extra oxygen into the furnace (the city of Jerusalem) to increase the heat that purifies the metal (the inhabitants of Jerusalem) (see title, "The Master Potter" following Ezek. 22:13-16) (above).

Jerusalem's Prophets are like Roaring Lions Tearing their Prey.

Ezekiel 22:23-25 ----- ²³And the word of the LORD came to me: ²⁴"Son of man, say to her, You are a land that is not cleansed or rained upon in the day of indignation. ²⁵The conspiracy of her prophets in her midst is like a roaring lion tearing the prey; they have devoured human lives; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in her midst.

What a terrible indictment men who call themselves prophets of the LORD, God likens to roaring lions devouring their prey. Jerusalem's prophets are accused of being full of conspiracies, meaning they had secret plans between themselves, most likely planning cunning ways they could pervert God's word to their advantage.

Jerusalem's Priests are Men of Violence.

Ezekiel 22:26 ----- ²⁶Her priests have done violence to my law and have profaned my holy things. They have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and they have disregarded my Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them.

The Priests of Jerusalem: -

- Committed violence to God's law, meaning they perverted it (for their own gain).
- Profaned God's Holy things (they put altars to idols in the temple).
- Made no distinction between the holy and the common (they honoured other gods more than God Himself).
- Never taught the difference between what was acceptable to God and what was not.
- Disregarded God's Sabbaths and treated them with disrespect.

Jerusalem's Leaders are like Wolves tearing their Prey.

Ezekiel 22:27-28 ----- ²⁷Her princes in her midst are like wolves tearing the prey, shedding blood, destroying lives to get dishonest gain. ²⁸And her prophets have smeared whitewash for them, seeing false visions and divining lies for them, saying, 'Thus says the Lord GOD,' when the LORD has not spoken.

Jerusalem's leaders: -

- Are like wolves tearing the prey.
- Kill the innocent for their own gain, probably through perverting justice so they could take possession of their land and homes.
- Destroying lives to get dishonest gain, meaning cheating others out of what is rightfully theirs.

To add to this wickedness and make the prophets corruption even more deceptive they are making Jerusalem's leaders look like God's chosen men by saying, "Thus says the Lord God" and then speaking false visions that make the leaders look like God's chosen men.

The People of the Land.

Ezekiel 22:29 ----- ²⁹The people of the land have practiced extortion and committed robbery. They have oppressed the poor and needy, and have extorted from the sojourner without justice.

Sadly even the common people in the street: -

- Practiced extortion, meaning they obtain something such as money from somebody by using force, threats, or other unacceptable methods or they charge excessive amounts of money for their goods (i.e. food and clothing etc.).
- Where committing robbery, oppressing the poor and needy for their own gain or so they could make greater profits.
- Forced the travellers to pay more than they should and cheating them out of justice.

The LORD Sought for a Righteous Man.

Ezekiel 22:30-31 ----- ³⁰And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none. ³¹Therefore I have

poured out my indignation upon them. I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath. I have returned their way upon their heads, declares the Lord GOD."

These verses are so heart wrenching, "God sought for a man amongst His chosen people, but could not find one." Imagine for a moment an earthly father who has a large family saying, "I sought amongst my own family to find just one who I could be proud of and there was none, they were all grossly corrupt," how heart-broken this father would be, especially knowing that he has to bring justice upon them for their wicked deeds. The LORD Himself sought for a righteous man amongst the prophets, the priests, the leaders and the people but could not find one. The cup of iniquity is full and overflowing, which means the people by their own wicked actions have forced God to bring judgment upon them.

Today God is establishing an eternal family by love, Christ manifested this love on the bloodstained cross of Calvary. May God's searching eyes find many in His global Kingdom that are worthy of the price His Son paid so that even the lowest child of Adam could be saved by grace and not by works and find multitudes of children that any father would be proud of.

End.