

EZEKIEL 20:45-22:31 | THE LAND AND THE CITY

EZEKIEL 22:1-16 | THE CITY DEFILED

- Verses 1-2 - The judgments on the **bloody city** has been determined and will happen. This is the judgment by God via the Babylonians.
- Verses 3-4 –
 - Jerusalem had no one to blame but herself: **thou hast caused thy days to draw near** (v. 4). The activity of the city is the reason (note the word **therefore**) that God will make Jerusalem to be **a reproach unto the heathen** (v. 4).
 - *Theology note*: Either it is true that the behavior of those in Jerusalem was the reason for the judgment, or it was not. The Reformed Theological position that God ordained their behavior and the judgment does not align with the plain wording of this text.
- Verse 5 –
 - The judgment is declared: Israel will be **a reproach** (v. 4) and will be mocked (vv. 4, 5).
- Verses 6-12 - The abominations in detail.
 - The abominations of Israel include:
 - The leaders use their position to **shed blood** (v. 6).
 - Parents are not honored (v. 7, where **set light by father and mother** is a quote from Deut. 27:16, carrying a curse).
 - **Oppression** of the helpless (v. 7).
 - Disregard of **holy things** and **sabbaths** (v. 8).
 - Shameful behavior (v. 9).
 - They **discovered their fathers' nakedness** (v. 10). This strange condemnation is explained in Leviticus 20:11, and condemned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:1. Note that this is the same sin as committed by Ham in Genesis 9:22-23.
 - They had sexual relations with women who were **set apart** for religious reasons (v. 10) along with various other sexual sins (v. 11).
 - They had been paid to **shed blood** (v. 12).
 - They had **taken usury...and greedily gained** from their neighbors (v. 12). Usury is beyond collecting interest; it is taking advantage of your neighbor's need.
- Verses 13-16 - The Judgment Detailed
 - God will punish Israel in such a way that she will not be able to **be strong** (v. 14). The ultimate punishment was to be taken from the land, when God will **scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse thee in the countries** (v. 15).
 - In this announcement, the prophecy has moved from the immediate context of deportation to Babylon to the later consequence of dispersion to the nations.

EZEKIEL 22:17-22 | SYMBOL: DROSS

- Verses 17-22 –
 - The incrimination in these verses is strong. God says that Israel has **all become dross** (v. 18). Not that it is *mixed with dross*, but it is **become dross**.
 - The Young's Literal Translation says *Israel hath been to Me for dross*.

- This makes sense with the next part of verse 18 which says **they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead**, things which are dross for God (whose home is gold and crystal).
- The Lord promises a judgment of burning for the nation, as dross would be burned and thrown away. When this was complete, the people would **know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you.**
- There are two reasons that this judgment could not be interpreted as fulfilled in the Holocaust:
 - After the Holocaust, the Jewish people did not recognize the Lord (as implied in verse 22). Rather, they rejected the concept of being a *chosen people* and took a very secular worldview.
 - The Holocaust took place in the time of the mystery of the dispensation of the age of grace. Old Testament prophecy says *nothing* of what takes place in this dispensation. At the time of Ezekiel, details about this mystery age were **hid in God** (Eph. 3:9).
- This prophecy was not fulfilled in the Babylonian exile, nor in the later diaspora. It is yet unfulfilled, awaiting a future time of prophetic fulfillment, after the rapture.

EZEKIEL 22:23-31 | LAND NOT CLEANSED

- Verses 23-29 –
 - Israel is **the land that is not cleansed** (v. 24).
 - Her problems are placed into four categories:
 - **Her prophets** (v. 25, 28). They have a conspiracy, using her to get rich. They speak on the Lord's behalf **when the Lord hath not spoken** (v. 28).
 - **Her priests** (v. 26). They have become secular and made sacred things to be secular.
 - **Her princes** (v. 27). They kill for **dishonest gain**.
 - **Her people** (v. 29). They have **used oppression** as their *modus operandi* and **exercised robbery** to achieve their goals. For their own benefit they have **vexed the poor and needy** and **oppressed the stranger wrongfully**.
- Verses 30-31 –
 - The Lord wants **a man among them** who will **stand in the gap**.
 - Why did the Lord not seek *a group of men*?
 - Perhaps because a group is almost always a shadow of one man?
 - Perhaps this is a reminder that the nation needed, more than anything, her Messiah as **a man among them**, but that this was not yet the time.
 - Perhaps the **man among them** must be one of their leaders, for they certainly had men like Jeremiah, Daniel, and even Ezekiel.
 - In the end, there was no man to **make up the hedge, and stand in the gap** (v. 30). The Lord had earlier praised one who would serve as a **repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in** (Is. 58:12).
 - Because there was no man in the gap God promised to pour out **mine indignation upon them** (v. 31). It is amazing that this indicates that *God would have stopped the judgment* if one leader (just one!) had stood in the gap.