Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

Part 366 – Face Toward Jerusalem Through Fuel To The Fire (Ezekiel 21:1-32)

1. Was the Lord for or against Israel in this context?

Against them: *"(1) And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, set thy face toward Jerusalem, and drop thy word toward the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel, (3) And say to the land of Israel, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked"* (**Ezekiel 21:1-3**).

- Again (cf. **Ezekiel 20:46**), we have Ezekiel being told to set his face toward a place and dropping the word. As before, this place is Jerusalem (**Ezekiel 4:7**).
- Dropping the word is to be understood negatively as words against them (**Amos 7:16**).
- Prophets being sent to prophesy AGAINST people (**Jeremiah 26:12**) was a large part of Ezekiel's work (**Ezekiel 4:7**; **6:2**; **11:4**; **13:2**; **20:46**; **21:2**; **25:2**; **28:21**, **29:2**; **34:2**; **25:2**; **28:2**; **39:1**).
- The Lord is against them (**Ezekiel 5:8**).
- We have learned that a third of the people that would die at the hand of the Lord would do so by the sword (**Ezekiel 5:12**).
- The cutting off of the righteous AND the wicked… Sinners aren't the only ones that suffer <u>physical consequences</u> for transgression (**Lamentations 2:21-22**). That does NOT mean the righteous perished spiritually (**Proverbs 14:32**).

2. Who was the Lord going to cut off so that all flesh would know He drew out His sword?

The righteous and the wicked in Israel: *"(4) Seeing then that I will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked, therefore shall my sword go forth out of his sheath against all flesh from the south to the north: (5) That all flesh may know that I the LORD have drawn forth my sword out of his sheath: it shall not return any more"* (**Ezekiel 21:4-5**).

- Again, all flesh in the land is going to suffer physically for the evil done therein (**Ezekiel 14:13-19**).
- The Lord's judgment was to be seen and understood by all as we have seen throughout the Old Testament (**Exodus 14:4**, **I Samuel 17:46**, **Psalms 83:1-18**, **Isaiah 46:8-13**, **Ezekiel 12:16**, etc.).

3. Why did the Lord want Ezekiel to sigh with bitterness?

"(6) Sigh therefore, thou son of man, with the breaking of thy loins; and with bitterness sigh before their eyes. (7) And it shall be, when they say unto thee, Wherefore sighest thou? that thou shalt answer, <u>For the tidings; because it cometh: and every heart shall melt, and all hands shall be feeble, and every spirit shall faint, and all knees shall be weak as water: behold, it cometh, and shall be brought to pass</u>, saith the Lord GOD" (**Ezekiel 21:6-7**).

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- The Lord had instructed Ezekiel to have an outward emotional reaction (**Isaiah 58:1** and **Ezekiel 6:11**).
- The breaking of the loins (**Jeremiah 30:5-6** and **Lamentations 2:11**).
- When Ezekiel's emotional reaction was observed in inquired of, he was to tell them for the things that were coming (**Jeremiah 4:6** and **Ezekiel 7:25**; **32:9**).

4. What was sharpened, furbished [polished], and set to contemn [despise; refuse]?

A sword to make a sore slaughter: *"(9) Son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus saith the LORD; Say, A sword, a sword is sharpened, and also furbished: (10) It is sharpened to make a sore slaughter; it is furbished that it may glitter: should we then make mirth? it contemneth the rod of my son, as every tree. (11) And he hath given it to be furbished, that it may be handled: this sword is sharpened, and it is furbished, to give it into the hand of the slayer. (12) Cry and howl, son of man: for it shall be upon my people, it shall be upon all the princes of Israel: terrors by reason of the sword shall be upon my people: smite therefore upon thy thigh. (13) Because it is a trial, and what if the sword contemn even the rod? it shall be no more, saith the Lord GOD"* (**Ezekiel 21:9-13**).

- **Psalms 7:11-13**, **Isaiah 34:1-5**, and **Jeremiah 15:2**.

5. Whether Ezekiel turned his face to the right or the left, could he look where the fury of the Lord would not be?

No: *"(14) Thou therefore, son of man, prophesy, and smite thine hands together, and let the sword be doubled the third time, the sword of the slain: it is the sword of the great men that are slain, which entereth into their privy chambers. (15) I have set the point of the sword against all their gates, that their heart may faint, and their ruins be multiplied: ah! it is made bright, it is wrapped up for the slaughter. (16) Go thee one way or other, either on the right hand, or on the left, whithersoever thy face is set. (17) I will also smite mine hands together, and I will cause my fury to rest: I the LORD have said it"* (**Ezekiel 21:14-17**).

- Remember, some people were trying to hide from God (**Ezekiel 8:12**).
- God accomplished making their hearts to faint (**Lamentations 5:17**).
- The end was seen in every direction (**Ezekiel 7:2**).
- His fury to rest (**Ezekiel 5:12-17**).

6. Though Judah and the Ammonites would view Ezekiel's prophesies as a false divination, would that view keep the reality of God's judgment from coming upon them?

No: *"(18) The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying, (19) Also, thou son of man, appoint thee two ways, that the sword of the king of Babylon may come: both twain shall come forth out of one land: and choose thou a place, choose it at the head of the way to the city. (20) Appoint a way, that the sword may come to Rabbath of the Ammonites, and to Judah in Jerusalem the defenced. (21) For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination: he made his arrows bright, he consulted*

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with images, he looked in the liver. (22) At his right hand was the divination for Jerusalem, to appoint captains, to open the mouth in the slaughter, to lift up the voice with shouting, to appoint battering rams against the gates, to cast a mount, and to build a fort. (23) And it shall be unto them as a false divination in their sight, to them that have sworn oaths: but he will call to remembrance the iniquity, that they may be taken. (24) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your transgressions are discovered, so that in all your doings your sins do appear; because, I say, that ye are come to remembrance, ye shall be taken with the hand. (25) And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, (26) Thus saith the Lord GOD; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. (27) I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him. (28) And thou, son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning the Ammonites, and concerning their reproach; even say thou, The sword, the sword is drawn: for the slaughter it is furbished, to consume because of the glittering: (29) Whiles they see vanity unto thee, whiles they divine a lie unto thee, to bring thee upon the necks of them that are slain, of the wicked, whose day is come, when their iniquity shall have an end. (30) Shall I cause it to return into his sheath? I will judge thee in the place where thou wast created, in the land of thy nativity" (**Ezekiel 21:18-30**).

- They would act as though this was a false vision (**Ezekiel 11:3**), they would listen to their false peace, but judgment was surely coming (**Jeremiah 6:13-30**).
- Mankind likes to act like reckoning won't occur (**II Peter 3:1-14**).

7. What type of men was the Lord going to deliver them to as fuel to the fire?
   Brutish [burn; kindle] men who were skillful to destroy; in reference to Babylon (vs. 19; 21): *"(31) And I will pour out mine indignation upon thee, I will blow against thee in the fire of my wrath, and deliver thee into the hand of brutish men, and skilful to destroy. (32) Thou shalt be for fuel to the fire; thy blood shall be in the midst of the land; thou shalt be no more remembered: for I the LORD have spoken it"* (**Ezekiel 21:31-32**).

   - A skillful destroyer (**Jeremiah 21:4** and **Habakkuk 1:5-8**).
   - Think about this: *"An evil man seeketh only rebellion: therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him"* (**Proverbs 17:11**).
   - As we previously saw in the last chapter (**Ezekiel 20:47-48**), they are just fuel for the fire (**Ezekiel 15:6**).
   - For their evil doings which they refused to repent of (**Jeremiah 4:1-18**).

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