

Survey of the Bible **Ezekiel 25-32**

Most of what we've seen in the book of Ezekiel has been God's declaration of judgment on a stiff-necked people who have profaned the only God and Creator by turning to false gods and using the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as a prop in their religious lives to maintain some sort of continuity with the saints of old.

In other words, being an Israelite is one in name only, not because they have embraced the faith of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, thus the name Israelite, but because it is convenient to say they have a God who has covenanted with their forefathers.

But Paul makes it clear that having the name of God attached to the Jews no more makes you a child of God any more than merely naming the name of Christ makes you a Christian.

Romans 2:28-29 ²⁸ For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. ²⁹ But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

Later in this letter Paul would return to this same theme of who Israel actually is.

Romans 9:6-8 ⁶ But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel; ⁷ nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." ⁸ That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

In other words, it is not the physical descendants of Israel who are the true Israel. It is both Jew and Gentile who have believed on Christ alone who are the true Israel.

Galatians 6:14-16 ¹⁴ But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵ For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. ¹⁶ And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

And so, Ezekiel is addressing the physical descendants of Abraham and is declaring that those who are of the flesh who have not believed on God and His promises, as did Abraham, are nothing more than an Israel in name only and will face God's wrath, both as individuals and as a nation.

And this is what we saw in chapter 24 of Ezekiel as the prophet makes it clear what is in store the nation of Israel in those days.

Ezekiel 24:12-14 ¹² "She has wearied *Me* with toil, Yet her great rust has not gone from her; *Let* her rust *be* in the fire! ¹³ "In your filthiness is lewdness. Because I *would* have cleansed you, Yet you are not clean, You will not be cleansed from your filthiness again Until I have spent My wrath on you. ¹⁴ "I, the LORD, have spoken; it is coming and I will act. I will not relent, and I will not pity and I will not be sorry; according to your ways and according to your deeds I will judge you," declares the Lord GOD."

But Ezekiel has another message that is not limited to the nation of Israel, because despite how God has been instrumental in bringing other nations against Israel and Judah in judgment, there is a message for the entire world when it comes to God's judgment.

In fact, from chapters 25-32 Ezekiel will spend a great deal of time addressing the known world of his day found in the nations of Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon, and Egypt.

In doing this God is showing how no one will escape His final judgment on the entire world on the last day.

Keep in mind that Ezekiel is giving us a snapshot of redemptive history as did Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel and Amos, all of whom were called on by God to warn of God's impending judgment on Israel and Judah, as our Lord called on Assyria and Babylon to carry out His judgment.

And so, though Ezekiel is addressing a real people in history at a particular time his message is also addressing a future people in a future time that will not escape the judgment on the world.

And Ezekiel introduces this truth in chapter 25 with one particular nation among many.

Ezekiel 25:1-4 ^{NAU} And the word of the LORD came to me saying, ² "Son of man, set your face toward the sons of Ammon and prophesy against them, ³ and say to the sons of Ammon, 'Hear the word of the Lord GOD! Thus says the Lord GOD, "Because

you said, 'Aha!' against My sanctuary when it was profaned, and against the land of Israel when it was made desolate, and against the house of Judah when they went into exile, ⁴ therefore, behold, I am going to give you to the sons of the east for a possession, and they will set their encampments among you and make their dwellings among you; they will eat your fruit and drink your milk.

According to verse 3, why is God judging Ammon?

Because they mocked the sanctuary of God in the midst of Israel and they mocked the land of Israel and the house of Judah.

But what is at the heart of this judgment?

They have mocked the living God and creator as they have mocked the people who were chosen by God.

It would be easy to say that the chosen people being mocked were the central reason God judged the nations, but that could not be further from the truth.

These same chosen people, Israel and Judah, are being told by Ezekiel that they deserve God's wrath as do the surrounding nations, so it can't be the chosen people who are the focus. Rather, it is God Himself who is the focus as to why any judgment is taking place.

This is precisely what our Lord Jesus implied when He struck down Saul on the road to Damascus.

Acts 26:14-15 ¹⁴ "And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' ¹⁵ "And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.

Wait a minute. I thought Saul was persecuting the Christians, how is it that Jesus can say to Saul, "you are persecuting Me?"

The people of God are identified with God through a covenant. Therefore, if you are part of that covenant community then what happens to you happens to the God you are identified with.

This is why Ezekiel can make a distinction between Israel and Judah and the rest of the world, despite the fact that the covenant people have abandoned their God.

Each will be judged according to the covenant under which they live before God. For Israel and Judah they will be judged according to the covenant given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

But what covenant will Moab, Ammon, Babylon and the rest of the nations be judged by?

In a sense they will fall under the same covenant since that covenant would not exclude the nations surrounding Israel.

Do you remember the covenant that God made with Abraham? It was not limited to Israel only.

Genesis 17:5-8 ⁵ "No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations. ⁶ "I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you. ⁷ "I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. ⁸ "I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

Now, obviously the context of that message certainly included a special but temporal application of that covenant for the nation of Israel. And again, Paul makes this abundantly clear as he addresses this very covenant in Genesis 17.

Romans 4:14-25 ¹⁴ For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; ¹⁵ for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation. ¹⁶ For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, ¹⁷ (as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") in the presence of Him whom he believed, *even* God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. ¹⁸ In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE." ¹⁹ Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; ²⁰ yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith,

giving glory to God, ²¹ and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform. ²² Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. ²³ Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, ²⁴ but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵ *He* who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

My point is that Ezekiel is addressing far more than a covenant people called Israel, but all people who would ultimately fall under this new covenant, found in the Messiah Jesus, that was promised to Abraham.

But as I said earlier, God always deals with people in a covenantal relationship. If God had never entered into a covenant with Abraham we would still be judged under God's covenant.

Does anyone know what that covenant is?

It is the covenant that God entered into with Adam and Eve. It was a covenant of works as creatures who were to faithfully reflect God as His image bearers.

Genesis 1:26-27 ²⁶ Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Therefore, all of humanity is under a covenant with God whether they like it or not, and most don't. This is why God is just to judge all men because all men are in a covenantal relationship with God. And all men will be condemned under that covenant.

This is why the new covenant was graciously given to us by God.

But as we return to Ezekiel he continues to heap condemnation on the surrounding nations of Israel, and though each nation is judged individually it is the nation of Tyre that really sums up why all men from every nation deserves to be condemned by God.

Ezekiel 28:1-2 ^{NAU} The word of the LORD came again to me, saying, ² "Son of man, say to the leader of Tyre, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Because your heart is lifted up And you have said, 'I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods In the heart of the seas'; Yet you

are a man and not God, Although you make your heart like the heart of God—

This is where the world is today and for all intents and purposes it is also where the church is headed. This is why when we see God judging His chosen nation of Israel, who has rejected their God, it is also a picture of that future judgment of God's chosen institution called the church of Jesus Christ.

Like Israel, there will be a day when the church, and by that I mean the visible church, will also reject their God.

How is that possible?

Like the Israel of old, (who was called to represent the Lord in this world but apostatized), the church also will turn from their God, Creator and Savior at the end of days.

In fact, Paul addresses this when prophesying of a future apostasy of the church.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 ^{NAU} Now we request you, brethren, *with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,* ² that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³ Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come unless the apostasy comes first*, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

^{NAU} **1 Timothy 4:1** But the Spirit explicitly says that *in later times some will fall away from the faith*, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,

Jesus Himself tells us of this future apostasy of the church as a falling away prior to His coming back at the end of the age.

Matthew 24:8-13 ⁸ "But all these things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs. ⁹ "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. ¹⁰ "*At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another.* ¹¹ "*Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.* ¹² "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. ¹³ "But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

It is this church that we see falling into this place of apostasy today where many of those who name the name of Christ, (and here I

don't even include the cults, like the Jehovah's witnesses or the Mormons and so on, but those who are considered orthodox), as one's who deny the basic tenets of the faith: biblical inerrancy, the deity of Jesus Christ, His perfect sinless life, His death on the cross as an atonement, and His resurrection from the dead.

There are scores of others who deny what we might call less foundational truths like the miracles of Jesus, the need for a 6 day creation of the universe, and so forth, but there is no question that in these latter days, the apostasy is in full swing and will ultimately culminate in the church merely becoming a shell of what it was intended to be as it whores after anything other than Christ and this is why the book of Revelation refers to the church in those terms.

Revelation 17:1-2 ^{NAU} Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, ² with whom the kings of the earth committed *acts of* immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality."

Here the harlot becomes like the world as she commits acts of immorality with the world. This is the same exact thing we see of Israel in the days of old.

^{NAU} **Isaiah 1:21** How the faithful city has become a harlot, She *who* was full of justice! Righteousness once lodged in her, But now murderers.

Isaiah 57:3-5 ³ "But come here, you sons of a sorceress, Offspring of an adulterer and a prostitute. ⁴ "Against whom do you jest? Against whom do you open wide your mouth And stick out your tongue? Are you not children of rebellion, Offspring of deceit, ⁵ *Who* inflame yourselves among the oaks, Under every luxuriant tree, Who slaughter the children in the ravines, Under the clefts of the crags?"

^{NAU} **Jeremiah 2:20** "For long ago I broke your yoke *And* tore off your bonds; But you said, 'I will not serve!' For on every high hill And under every green tree You have lain down as a harlot.

History continually repeats itself because the sin of men repeat what they are, haters of God. Only those whose hearts have been raised from the dead will persevere to the end because it is God Himself who will bring His children home.

John 6:39 ³⁹ "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.

But there will also be a judgment on the last day that will include not only the world, who did not recognize God, but even those who named the name of God in the church but were proved to be harlots as they played at the game of being God's people.

Matthew 7:22-23 ²² "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' ²³ "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

This is what Ezekiel is foreshadowing as he identifies the nation of Israel as the one who has rejected her God along with Gog and Magog who represent the rest of the world.

And Ezekiel goes down the list of the nations who have elevated themselves above God and have worshipped the creature rather than the Creator.

On this list is Egypt who was one of the power nations at that time, and from chapters 29-32 God spends a great deal of time proclaiming judgment on her.

Ezekiel 29:2-3 ² "Son of man, set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt and prophesy against him and against all Egypt. ³ "Speak and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, The great monster that lies in the midst of his rivers, That has said, 'My Nile is mine, and I myself have made *it*.'

Here we see the rulers of Egypt, along with their gods, taking credit for the creation of the Nile. God says, you created nothing. I am the Creator of all, including the Nile.

By the way, why do you think God might have spent so much time addressing Egypt in these 4 chapters?

It may very well be that Egypt had more knowledge than any other nation about the God of Israel as they housed Israel for 400 years and felt the personal hand of God through the judgment of the plagues before He brought His people out with a mighty hand.

But in the context of Ezekiel Egypt was actually an ally of Israel at the time of Babylon's invasion, but as is intimated in our text, Egypt lacked any desire to come alongside Judah when she reached out to Egypt.

Ezekiel 29:6-8 ⁶ "Then all the inhabitants of Egypt will know that I am the LORD, Because they have been *only* a staff *made* of reed to the house of Israel. ⁷ "When they took hold of you with the hand, You broke and tore all their hands; And when they leaned on you, You broke and made all their loins quake." ⁸ "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will bring upon you a sword and I will cut off from you man and beast.

And this theme against Egypt where God judges this nation will continue for another 3 full chapters.

When we come back next week we'll pick up in chapter 33 and move as far as we can, keeping in mind that in these last chapters is found some very important teachings including the restoration of Israel, as seen in the valley of the dry bones coming to life in chapter 37, along with the two sticks.

We'll also see how Gog and Magog come back into the picture as God destroys them and promises to restore Israel back in the land in chapters 38-39.

From chapters 40-47 we have a detailed picture of the restoration of the temple and I think you'll find it fascinating what that portion says and what it actually means.