

NOVEMBER 10

Ezekiel 21-22

As you read this, keep underlining, *shall know that I am the Lord*. It is behind all of what God is doing. Also, just think about this very intense judgment of Israel and others. If God is this focused on cleansing and judging His own people, what is it going to be like for those who deny Christ and for the generation on the earth who rebel against God and persecute His people during the Tribulation?

Ezekiel 21

Vs. 1-5 As a result of the people ridiculing or criticizing Ezekiel because of his cryptic visions, God "sharpens" the focus. Now it is a *sword* brought against Jerusalem and the land. That's pretty easy to understand.

Vs. 6-7 Ezekiel was to add public groaning to this message. Apparently he walked around the market making noises, causing the parents once again to scramble and find their children.

Vs. 8-13 Somehow I think this must have been a very loud prophecy. It is almost funny. They didn't respect *the rod*, so now they get *the sword*.

Vs. 14-17 I think Ezekiel acted this out publicly with a sword, sending parents scrambling again to save their children. Imagine the shock of seeing Ezekiel just walking down the street, wondering what insane thing he might do next.

Vs. 18-23 I'm not sure how Ezekiel acted this one out, but it sounds like it was visual. Apparently v. 21 actually happened. Nebuchadnezzar had a choice to go to Ammon (modern day Amman, Jordan) or to Jerusalem, and he and his advisors did the superstitious version of flipping a coin. Oddly enough their divinations told them to go and attack Jerusalem. HmMMMM.

Vs. 24-27 The *prince of Israel* is Zedekiah.

Vs. 28-32 The *Ammonites* were in the alliance with Egypt and Israel to fight against Babylon. When Nebuchadnezzar chose to go to Jerusalem first and destroy the city, these allies were very happy. Also, when Babylon did take Jerusalem and appointed Gedaliah to be governor of Judah, the Ammonites sent Ishmael to kill Gedaliah. That is the reason for this "honorable" mention of judgment for the Ammonites. In a few chapters there will be more judgment predicted for them.

Ezekiel 22

Vs. 1-16 These pronouncements of judgment must have been ringing in people's ears. Here, once again, the nation is shown to be totally corrupt, not just because of idolatry or neglecting the things of God, but because of the spilling of innocent blood. Notice how often you find blood in this section. Notice too that it began with the leaders and became a part of the culture. If you have a concordance or an online Bible, do a search on "innocent blood." You'll notice that God takes that very seriously. *And also for the innocent blood that he (King Manasseh) had shed. For he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD would not pardon.* (2 Kings 24:4 ESV)

Vs. 17-22 So what do you do if your "ore" is totally impure? You burn out the impurities. Note that this isn't just for punishment, but also for redeeming some who will know that He is the Lord and who will acknowledge why God has brought this upon them.

Vs. 23-31 The point of this cleansing is seen in the punishment of different groups of people. Find and circle them. Here the corruption began with the religious leaders and seeped into the life of the people.

V. 30 is very famous. Now, there was still a small remnant of godly people and there were men like Jeremiah still in Jerusalem. So what does it mean that there was no one who would stand in the gap? I think it means there was no leader who was willing to lead and fight against the corruption of the nation, to lead them back to God. Moses would have been this kind of man. Jeremiah was not designed to be that kind of a leader, although he was courageous, yet he only moved as God moved him. It seems that all of the godly leaders had been killed in trying to stop the corruption and had had their blood spilled in the city. This then was a judgment not only on their murders; but in murdering the good leaders, the people had removed the protection these vocal leaders could have provided.

When I think of standing in the gap, I don't think it is courage as much as love for Christ and conviction that gets the job done. You come to the point of saying, "If this stuff is really true,

then somebody's gotta do something." And you know that that somebody is you. It's time to live dangerously in the hands of God. Check out the song, "Living Dangerously in the Hands of God," by Steve Camp.

Hebrews 10:1-17

Vs. 1-4 This is a brilliant argument. The very fact that the sacrifices had to be repeated year after year meant they could not bring a person to lasting forgiveness. They were only an image of what was to come in Christ.

V. 4 is a rather famous and important verse and declaration.

Vs. 5-7 Laura and I have Psalm 40:1-10 memorized, and these verses are from that psalm. Verse 5 in the Hebrew says "but you have given me an open ear." The translators of the Septuagint (Greek OT) understood this verse as being figurative for a body. The Septuagint would have been the Bible that Jesus and His generation read from. The fact that this verse is stated here shows that "body" is a proper rendering and understanding. Jesus was given a body and was given understanding of His mission.

Vs. 8-10 Again, these are very strong and logical verses. Already in Psalm 40 God was showing that a new covenant was necessary and it would be instituted by the Son presenting Himself for sin.

Vs. 11-14 These verses say it all. Notice how the author brings v. 14 back together with v. 1 through the words *perfect/perfected*.

Vs. 15-17 These, again, are the spiritual promises to Israel from Jeremiah 31. Israel receives both the spiritual and physical promises for the Millennial Kingdom. The church partakes of the spiritual promise now as the Bride of Christ. I still find it interesting that the Jews knew that the Holy Spirit was promised. *And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father.* (Acts 1:4-5)

Psalms 108

Vs. 1-4 Most of the Psalms begin with a declaration of confidence, but this one seems to stand out. This was probably during the early days of David being king. He knew of God's faithful provision through all the years of running and through all of the uncertainty. I've never seen before how David declared the *steadfast love* of the Lord so often. Laura added to this by showing me that God's *steadfast love* and *faithfulness* are often mentioned together.

Vs. 5-6 I think that when David knew how God had saved him so many times, it gave him a vision of God making His glory known in all the earth.

Vs. 7-9 David's confidence in the Word.

Vs. 10-13 David knew to pray, yet he was confident in God's care.

Proverbs 27:12

Compromise is one thing; prudence is another. Jesus told His disciples to beware of men, and therefore, to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Paul told Timothy to beware and avoid Alexander the coppersmith.

On the other hand, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow to Nebuchadnezzar, willing to die if necessary; and God brought an incredible blessing for all of Israel in exile. Wisdom must be in knowing the difference in these situations and understanding the Spirit's leading.