

NOVEMBER 8

Ezekiel 18-19

Ezekiel 18

Vs. 1-4 God does a little housekeeping here. Seen here and in v. 25, the people were actually blaming others and God for their misfortune. This portion is interesting when you place it next to the Scripture that says God visits the sins of the fathers on the sons down to the fourth generation. (Ex. 34:6-7) With this text in Ezekiel you see how God Himself understood that declaration. If the generations persist in the sins of the fathers, as they probably will, judgment will follow. But if a single person is different or if he repents, God treats that person according to his own behavior.

Vs. 5-9 A righteous man. God is giving a basic definition regarding behavior. Not only that, He is not talking about eternal life or damnation, rather how this person would fare in the upcoming judgment of Jerusalem. This would be similar to Abraham talking to the angel of the Lord (Jesus) in Genesis 18:23-33, where Abe was basically trying to save Lot.

Vs. 10-13 An unrighteous son of the righteous man.

Vs. 14-18 The righteous son of the unrighteous son of the righteous man.

Vs. 19-20 This sums up these past three examples, and v. 20 says it all.

Vs. 21-23 This is an unrighteous man who repents. Notice that this is not talking about eternal life. It is life on earth, and in terms of the coming judgment of Jerusalem, who would live and who would die on earth.

V. 23 This is why we are left on earth, to proclaim this in the harvest. Some people will turn to God.

V. 24 This is a righteous person who goes bad. The penalty is death on earth, not eternal judgment. Imagine someone in Jerusalem getting caught up with the hopelessness and the "tomorrow we die" mentality and deciding to go for the gusto and go nuts morally. God is saying that person would receive judgment. That is the same as today if a good person goes on a one-night binge and drives drunk and kills a person.

Vs. 25-29 It is clear to us that Israel was shifting blame to God. Eventually they would see that their own sin and judgment was caused by themselves.

Vs. 30-32 What a very "grace-full" and loving declaration.

Ezekiel 19

This is a lament on Judah's kings.

Vs. 1-4 The *mother* is the nation of Israel. This *lion* taken by the Egyptians is the son of Josiah, Jehoahaz, whom Pharaoh Neco took into captivity.

Vs. 5-9 This is Jehoiachin, whom Nebuchadnezzar took into captivity to Babylon. Jehoiakim is skipped here because that donkey of a man only deserved the burial of a donkey.

Vs. 10-14 This is Zedekiah. After him, there will be no more kings in the line of David until Jesus. Truly, it was lamentable.

We've been reading about times getting worse and worse in Judah. We've seen bad rulers destroy what was good and allow a culture of ungodliness to grow. The word "ungodly" may seem subjective, but God being God is very objective. He is greater than human opinion on any subject. He is the One who says what reality is. For the people who were obeying and following God, there was the despair of seeing the land and its people come under judgment. But, God was

still working and giving hope to those who sought it. God's declarations of judgment and hope were meant to give people an opportunity to turn to Him. Sending men like Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel was an act of compassion on God's part.

Today in the harvest we know that judgment is coming. Human governments and nations are only incidental. The book of Revelation is the only book in the Bible that promises a blessing for reading it. God wants us to keep our perspective on the world and our commission. We cannot have heaven on this earth. Here is where we follow our Lord in the harvest, reaching out to the lost and making disciples, who make disciples, who make disciples, until our Lord returns.

Hebrews 9:1-10

Vs. 1-5 The approach to God in the law was very guarded and not available to everyone. Contrary to the people's habit of worshiping on hills, there was only one place that forgiveness could be sought, the tabernacle/temple.

One note here is that in v. 4 in the ESV it mentions the altar of incense being in the *Most Holy Place* instead of being in the *Holy Place* in front of the veil. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, it does not say altar, but censer. This is also the translation of the King James Version. A censer was a metal container on a chain that was filled with incense and swung to fill the room with the fragrance of the burning incense. That censer was probably what was inside the Most Holy Place and used on this one day when the high priest went inside. The altar of incense was in the Holy Place and stood in front of the veil.

Vs. 6-10 This sort of worship under the law was very limited. *Only the high priest* was allowed into the Most Holy Place and then only *once a year*.

This description of the Most Holy Place, the priest and the rituals leading up to the Day of Atonement under the law is building up to v. 11. In a way, this is not only saying the earthly routines and regulations of Judaism were limited and ineffective, but it is also saying that anything we do today that involves religious routines and regulations are equally as ineffective. We are always tempted to coat following Jesus with ritual. With what we'll see regarding the work of Jesus, no routine or liturgy or regulations are required for our spiritual life. We still insist on a liturgy in the West because it makes us feel more spiritual. I doubt that they have much liturgy in house churches in areas of the world where Christians are persecuted. A couple of believers in China meeting quickly and privately, praying and encouraging each other in the Word, is very honoring to God. This is perhaps more of what God has in mind, than what happens in most churches in the West on any given Sunday. What is essential to being a disciple in the harvest is following Jesus, reading His Word, and making disciples.

Psalm 106:32-48

Vs. 32-33 This rebellious people also assisted Moses in missing out on going into the land. Notice that *they made his spirit bitter*.

Vs. 34-39 This is a summation of the history of Israel in the land. This is what we are reading about in Ezekiel.

Vs. 40-42 This history of judgment goes from the judges right up to what we're reading in Ezekiel.

V. 43 Notice the interesting role this verse and this truth has between what is said before and what comes in v. 44. In spite of God continually rescuing them, they still rebelled. And although He punished them, God never gave up. Who says there is no love in the Old Testament?

Vs. 44-46 The psalmist is not only praising God for this; he is reminding God that there is a precedent for what he is about to ask. Notice the mention of hearing *their cry*, the *covenant*, the *steadfast love* and pity.

V. 47 Here is the plea. I would say that these are Ezekiel's people.

V. 48 Whoever wrote this understood that God would hear and act. The point of this long song is found in vs. 44-48. In spite of all of that, God still showed them mercy and heard them. Therefore, they should keep on praying, trusting Him and praising Him.

Proverbs 27:10

This proverb has to do with friends as opposed to relatives. The idea of not going *to your brother's house in the day of your calamity* is that, in this case, the brother lives weeks away. Instead, just go to your friend.

By not forsaking *your friend and your father's friend*, you will have friends who are near you *in the day of your calamity*.