

- I) V1-7 INTRO: Now the word of the LORD came to me saying Son of man set your face toward the
  - a) God has called a man by the name of Ezekiel to prophesy to the nation of Israel coming judgment
    - 1) During the same period of time, in a different location, Jeremiah also spoke to the people
  
- II) JEREMIAH: Had been left in Jerusalem, and at that time had been warning the people
  - a) Their false prophets had been prophesying peace, but God had said otherwise
    - 1) He told them that they would be in captivity for 70 years, but the people would not listen
    - 2) Jer 29:10 For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.
  
- III) OF COURSE: The people did not want to hear these kinds of messages
  - a) As is typical, they wanted messages that were more upbeat, optimistic, and positive
    - 1) Is 30:9-10 This *is* a rebellious people, Lying children, Children *who* will not hear the law of the LORD; Who say to the seers, "Do not see," And to the prophets, "Do not prophesy to us right things; Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits.
      - 2) 2 Ti 4:3-4 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.
  
- IV) REMEMBER: Ezekiel was with a group of Jews taken in Nebuchadnezzar's second attack on Jerusalem
  - a) He is in Babylon, working in an agricultural area near the river Chebar (a channel of the Euphrates)
    - 1) Most of the people were still in the land of Israel, and Jerusalem was still standing
  
- V) KEY: Ezekiel had the difficult duty of preaching a message of devastating judgment to come
  - a) SADLY: The people did not want to hear such a message, and were resistant to it
    - 1) The fact that judgment would come would validate Ezekiel as one speaking for God (V14)
    - 2) Ezek 2:5 As for them, whether they hear or whether they refuse--for they are a rebellious house--yet they will know that a prophet has been among them.
  
- VI) V1 NOW: The *word of the LORD* came to me saying Son of man set your face toward the mountains
  - a) This verse opens with the first of two messages, the second contained in Ch 7
    - 1) It is not a message created from Ezekiel's imagination, but is from the Lord
    - 2) Jer 23:16 Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; they speak a vision of their own heart, Not from the mouth of the LORD.
  
- VII) WHY: Is such a terrible judgment coming upon the people of Israel
  - a) Were they simply innocent people, falling into the hands of a tyrannical and angry God
    - 1) This was happening to them because they had turned their backs on God, and became idolaters
    - 2) They had been given great privileges, and that created great responsibility
  
- VIII) V2 SON OF MAN: Set your face toward the mountains of Israel and prophesy against them
  - a) This is not a poetic expression, but speaks of God literally judging the whole land
    - 1) There are various mountains found in Israel: Mt Carmel, Mt Hermon, Mt Gilboa, and others
  
- IX) V3-7 AND SAY: O mountains of Israel hear the word of the Lord GOD Thus says the Lord GOD

- a) **FACT:** He is speaking of the judgment against the high places, where idolatry was practiced
  - 1) **FACT:** God is making it clear that they are being judged because of their idolatry
- I) **KEY:** From the very beginning, God had made it clear that He would not tolerate idolatry
  - a) **THIS IS FOUND:** In God's original word to Israel: Idolatry was strictly forbidden
    - 1) Ex 20:2-5 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.
    - 2) Dt 6:14 You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are all around you
- II) **SADLY:** Idolatry plagued the nation of Israel throughout her history
  - a) God had commanded the nation to root out idolatry in the land they were receiving
    - 1) Dt 12:2-3 You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations which you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. And you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and burn their wooden images with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place
- III) **WHAT DID THEY DO:** They disobeyed God and entered in to idolatry
  - a) 2 Ki 17:10 They set up for themselves sacred pillars and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree.
    - 1) **GOD'S RESPONSE:** He brought judgment against them in righteous zeal (5:13)
- IV) **SOMETHING INTERESTING:** When they entered into idolatry, they also entered immorality
  - a) There is just something about worshiping creation that lends itself to this kind of life (Ro 1:20-28)
    - 1) 1 Ki 14:22-24 Now Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, more than all that their fathers had done. For they also built for themselves high places, sacred pillars, and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree. And there were also *perverted persons* (sodomites) in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.
      - 2) Col 3:5 Put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry
- V) **FACT:** Unlawful lust is tied in with lack of love for children, unnatural desires, and idolatry
  - a) The lack of love for God is manifest by a lack of genuine affection for others
    - 1) Lev 18:20-22 You shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, to defile yourself with her. And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to *Molech*, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD. You shall not lie with a man as with a woman. It is an abomination
      - 2) **MOLECH:** Children would be placed on the arms of the metal image, a bull's head on a man's body, and would roll into an open oven: flute players and drummers drowned out the screams of the babies while the mothers stood silently, revealing the voluntary character of the sacrifices
      - 3) Israel was guilty of practicing this kind of worship, and God judged them
- VI) **V3-7 SAY:** O mountains of Israel hear the word of the Lord GOD Thus says the Lord GOD
  - a) God would soon bring judgment on them through Babylon, a third and devastating time
    - 1) This came under the rule of King Zedekiah, in 588-586 BC
    - 2) 2 Ki 25:1-2 It came to pass in the 9th year of his reign, in the 10th month, on the 10th day of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and encamped

against it; and they built a siege wall against it all around. So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.

- I) **FACT:** The majority of the nation was judged
  - a) The people refused to tear down the high places, so God made sure it was done
  
- II) **DURING SOLOMON'S REIGN:** God had told him to worship Him alone
  - a) He was given permission to build God a temple, using the plans that his father had drawn up
    - 1) It took him 7 years to complete the building of the Temple, and then he dedicated it
  
- III) **KEY:** God responded to Solomon's prayer of dedication
  - a) 1 Ki 9:6-9
  
- IV) **ULTIMATELY:** Solomon did not remain loyal to the Lord, marrying many foreign wives
  - a) His wives turned his heart away from the Lord, and he went after other gods
    - 1) 1 Ki 11:7 Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon
    - 2) 1 Ki 11:11 God said He would tear the kingdom out of his hand and give it to a servant
    - 3) 1 Ki 12 Jeroboam's altar built, with two golden calves (in Dan and Bethel)
  
- V) **OVER THREE CENTURIES PASSED:** And the nation continued in their idolatry
  - a) God ultimately brought judgment on the nation, through Assyria and through Babylon
    - 1) 2 Ki 25:9-12 (Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard) burned the house of the LORD and the king's house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire. And all the army of the Chaldeans who were with the captain of the guard broke down the walls of Jerusalem all around. Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive the rest of the people who remained in the city and the defectors who had deserted to the king of Babylon, with the rest of the multitude. But the captain of the guard left some of the poor of the land as vinedressers and farmers.
  
- VI) **V8 YET:** I will leave a remnant so that you may have some who escape the sword among the nations
  - a) **KEY:** God's grace and mercy were extended to a godly remnant
    - 1) God did not bring a complete end to the nation of Israel
    - 2) Lam 3:22-26 Through the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!" The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the soul who seeks Him. It is good that one should hope and wait quietly For the salvation of the LORD.
  
- VII) **V9-10 THEN:** Those of you who escape *will remember Me* among the nations where they are carried
  - a) God brings this judgment against the nation because they have departed from Him
    - 1) It is intended to cause them to loathe themselves, or to break them that they might repent
    - 2) Lu 18:10-14 Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men-- extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."
  - 3) **V10 RESULT:** They will recognize that God is true to His word

- VIII) V11-12 **THUS:** Says the Lord God Pound your fists and stamp your feet and say Alas for all the evil
  - a) These are expressions of dismay, recognizing how terrible things were soon to be
- I) **THE FACT IS;** They would soon suffer the sword, famine, and the accompanying pestilence
  - a) This would engulf the whole land, it mattered not how far or how near Jerusalem they were
- II) V13-14 **THEN:** You shall know that I am the LORD when their slain are among their idols
  - a) When this judgment falls on them, they will recognize that God alone is worthy of worship
    - 1) Every place that they have committed idolatry will be under His judgment
    - 2) It would cover the entire land, from the north to the south (wilderness to Diblah)
    - 3) **RESULT:** They will know that He is the supreme God