

Ezekiel Notes Chapter 5-6

5:1-4. Next, he was told by God to take a sharp sword and cut the hair off of his head as well as his beard. He was to weigh the hair, then burn 1/3 of it at the center of the city. Then, when the days for the seize were complete, he was to strike with the sword another 1/3 all around the city. Then he was to scatter the last 1/3 into the wind and God would unsheathe his sword behind them. Ezekiel then took a few hairs and bound them onto the edge of his robe. Then he was to take a few and throw them into the fire and God said, “from it a fire will spread to all the house of Israel.”

⁵“Thus says the Lord God, ‘This is Jerusalem; I have set her at the center of the nations, with lands around her. ⁶But she has rebelled against **My ordinances** more wickedly than the nations and against **My statutes** more than the lands which surround her; for they have rejected **My ordinances** and have not walked in **My statutes.**’ ⁷Therefore, thus says the Lord God, ‘Because you have more turmoil than the nations which surround you *and* have not walked in **My statutes**, nor observed **My ordinances**, nor observed the ordinances of the nations which surround you, ⁸therefore, thus says the Lord God, ‘Behold, I, even I, am against you, and I will execute judgments among you in the sight of the nations (Ezek. 5:5-8).’

Alexander writes:

What had all this acting portrayed? The Lord interpreted it for those who might not understand initially (**5:5-17**). The city was Jerusalem, a city which was central among the nations in the outworking of God’s program (cf. Ps. 132:13-18). This city and the nation of Israel, because of their abominable and idolatrous iniquity over the years, would finally be judged by the lord through the Babylonians (cf. 2 Kings 25), as Moses declared in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 32. A siege would be the means of judgment upon the city. When the siege occurred, famine would strike the city to the extent that parents would eat their children and vice versa (cf. Lev. 26:29; Deut. 28:53; Lam. 4:10). The children of Israel would eat defiled food during the siege and in the lands of exile (Ezek. 4:13). One third of the inhabitants of Jerusalem would die in fire, pestilence and famine within the city during the siege (1 Kings 25:3, 9) A second third would be slain by the sword in the environs around Jerusalem as they sought to escape (cf. 2 Kings 25:18-21a; 2 Chron 36:17). The last third would be scattered to the wind in exile (2 Kings 25:11, 21b). Of the exiles, some would be burned and others slain by the sword in foreign lands. Only a small number of the exiles would be tucked securely into the hem of God’s garment as a safe remnant. Yahweh would not have pity on Jerusalem to spare it as He had in the past. His justice would be exercised in keeping the covenant (Lev. 26). When the judgment was complete, the people would know that Yahweh had spoken and acted.¹

2. The judgment coming on Judah chs. 6–7

Chapter 6 deals specifically with idolatry. Israel had, instead become like the nations around them. When God was about to place Israel in the promised land, he stated in Deuteronomy 4:6 in relation

¹ Alexander, *ibid.*, 21-22.

to the law and its statutes God gave them: “So keep and do *them*, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ They were supposed to be a spiritual light to the dark idolatrous nations by which they would be surrounded. But, as God’s message through Ezekiel reveals, that didn’t happen.

6:1-7. God lists the idolatrous practices that they had adopted from the nations around them. Ezekiel was to “prophesy against them.” He first speaks to the “Mountains of Israel.” In fact, He speaks against the mountains, the hills, the ravines and the valleys” because in all of these areas of Israel were pagan “high places” used to offer sacrifices and incense to the Canaanite gods. Alexander writes, “Canaanite religion employed the hilltops and valleys for their major places of idolatrous worship.”² God was about to send the Babylonians to those left in Judah and those Babylonians would destroy the paganist “high places” that the Jews had in place in direct disobedience to the first commandment they had agreed to on Mt. Horeb before crossing the Jordan River into the promised land. It said:

⁶ ‘I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ⁷ ‘You shall have no other gods before Me. ⁸ ‘You shall not make for yourself an idol, *or* any likeness *of* what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. ⁹ You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, ¹⁰ but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments (Deut. 5:6-10).

God goes on to explain that because of their consistent and total disobedience he would smash their altar, kill those who were worshipping there and they would not be buried, their bones would lie all around them. This will happen in all of their idolatrous cities. Those who survive will know one thing very clearly. As God states, “You will know that I am the Lord” (6:7). This phrase is repeated 68 times in Ezekiel. They had forgotten God, and they were reminded by the curses that God had promised he would bring on them if they did not obey (Deut. 28:11-68).

6:8-10. But God also told them, that he would leave a remnant. This is essential in the plan of God since He has made irrevocable promises to Israel [Abrahamic (Gen. 12:1-3; Land (Deut. 30:1-10); Davidic (2 Sam. 7:12-16) and soon to be announced the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-31, etc.) and he must have a remnant with which to fulfill those covenants. As He promised He would punish them, He has also promised that He will some day redeem Israel and fulfill these covenants. Note in verse nine that the remnant will be among those who are captive among the nations. They will recognize their sins of idolatry and loathe themselves. This speaks of their repentance. And because God inflicted this on Israel, it will bring this remnant to repentance, for they will know Him.

6:11-14. Because of the abominable idolatry of Israel, they will not just fall by the sword but also famine and plague. Not only will they experience death in battle against the Babylonians, but the result will also be that those who survive the sword will die of disease and starvation. This is God’s wrath poured out on them. Judah will be desolate and a wasteland. And the result will be that they

² Alexander, *ibid.*, 26.

will know God. He is faithful to His promises, both blessings and cursing. But He is also merciful and full of compassion when there is repentance. He will preserve a remnant to return to Jerusalem and Israel someday.