

The Book of EZEKIEL
Chapters 4 – 6
“God’s Judgment On Judah”
(Section 1- Chapters 4 - 24)

Chapter 4 - “Judgment Is A’Comin!”

(v1-8) Sign of Judgment - Babylonian siege upon Jerusalem

(v9-17) Sign of Judgment - Defiled bread - anxiety & dread

Chapter 5 - “God’s Reason for Judgment”

(v1-4) Hairy judgment of Judah (it was unusual for a priest, like Ezekeil to cut his hair).

(v5-11) Why the judgment? Let us turn to Deuteronomy Chapters 27 – 28; 30:15-20

(v12-17) A reproach, a taunt, a lesson, and an astonishment to the nations all around

Chapter 6 - “Judgment Upon the Jewish Idolaters”

(v1-7) Ezekiel prophesy against Israel

- IDOLATRY defined: The worship of something created as opposed to the worship of the Creator Himself. Scores of references to idolatry appear in the Old Testament. This shows that idolatry probably was the greatest temptation our spiritual forefathers faced. While we find bowing down to a statue no temptation, they apparently slipped into idolatry constantly. So serious was this sin that the prohibition against the making and worshiping of images was included as the second of the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:4-6).

Israel's ancient neighbors believed there were many gods. They worshiped whatever gods were necessary at a given time. An equally erroneous notion was that these gods either were the idols themselves or were represented by idols. Some people probably insisted that the idol was only an aid to worship and not the object of worship itself. But this distinction must have been hard to keep in mind. That is why the Bible strictly forbids the making of images of any kind-because they themselves receive the worship-a worship which God jealously reserves for Himself.

All the successive monarchs in the northern kingdom of Israel were bad. Invariably their sin involved idolatry. Starting with Elijah, the prophets called on the people to turn from the worship of false gods back to reverence for the true God. Hosea's entire book is devoted to preaching against idolatry. Under the figure of speech of divorcing the Lord and marrying Baal, he tied together the ideas of idolatry, spiritual adultery, and literal adultery (Hos 2:2; 4:2,13; 7:4; 8:5; 13:2).

Although there were some good kings in the southern kingdom of Judah, the bad ones invariably fell to idolatry. This prompted the major prophets-Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel-and most of the minor prophets as well to ridicule, condemn, and warn against idolatry. A sampling of courageous declarations from these courageous preachers would include Isa 2:8; Jer 50:2; Ezek 6:4-6; Mic 1:7; Hab 2:18; and Zech 13:2.

aThe captivity of the people of Israel at the hands of the Babylonians produced a permanent cure for the sin of idolatry. Never again, even to the present time, has Judaism succumbed to idolatry.

In the gospels there is virtually nothing about idolatry, but in the letters of Paul and the other New Testament books Christians are frequently warned against idolatry. The Christians lived in a world filled with idols. Both the Romans and the Greeks used them. Paul's observation about Athens in Acts 17:16 tells it well: "He saw that the city was given over to idols."

In the New Testament period the term idolatry began to be used as an intellectual concept. Idolatry became not the actual bowing down before a statue but the replacement of God in the mind of the worshiper. Col 3:5 points in this direction: "Put to death...covetousness, which is idolatry." (See also Eph 5:5.) At this point the modern believer must understand the vicious nature of idolatry. While we may not make or bow down to a statue, we must be constantly on guard that we let nothing come between us and God. As soon as anything does, that thing is an idol.

In addition to material objects such as houses, land, and cars, idols can be people, popular heroes, or those whom we love. Objects of worship can even include things like fame, reputation, hobbies, pride, and deeds done in the name of the Lord. Idolatry is a dangerous and deceitful sin. No wonder prophets preached against it so often and so strongly.

(from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

(v8-10) A remnant to survive

(v11-14) You shall know that I am the LORD!

