

EZEKIEL: BLOSSOMING DURING LIFE'S MOST SEVERE CRISES
Part II: "God's Preparation of His Saint to Separate from Evil in Spiritual Leaders"
(Ezekiel 4:1-11:25)

I. Introduction

- A. One of the toughest things for a Christian to face is the fall of spiritually admired leaders into sin and God's judgment. What is even harder to face is the public display of their sins in secular tabloids.
- B. God explains WHY we have to be exposed to this in Ezekiel 4:1-11:25:

II. God's Preparation of His Saint To Face Evil In Spiritual Leaders, Ezekiel 4:1-11:25:

- A. God directed Ezekiel to give four unusual object lessons to his captive countrymen on the severity of God's coming judgment on those Jews who were still in Palestine, Ez. 4:1-5:17:
 - 1. Object Lesson One - Ezekiel had to build a model of the city of Jerusalem under siege, 4:1-3.
 - 2. Object Lesson Two - Then he was forced of God to lie alternately on his left side and on his right side for prescribed days for each side to picture the years of captivity for the Northern Kingdom and Southern Kingdom respectively, Ez. 4:4-8.
 - 3. Object Lesson Three - Next, God had Ezekiel eat a very sparse diet of one quart of water and 8 ounces of coarse bread per day, baking the bread with cows dung to picture the scarcities experienced in the city of Jerusalem under siege, Ez. 4:9-17.
 - 4. Object Lesson Four - Finally, God had Ezekiel shave the hair from his head and alternately show with that hair what would happen to the inhabitants of Jerusalem: one part would be destroyed in the city, one part killed in battle, one part "blown" into exile and a faithful remnant left in the land to be subject to further trials, Ez. 5:1-17 with Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, p. 1145.
- B. Having whet the appetite of Ezekiel and his audience to wonder why such severe judgments were to come, God then declared to Ezekiel that WHY: the nation was guilty of mass idolatry, Ez. ch. 6.
- C. With this subject in view, God then described the great severity of that judgment to come in ch. 7.
- D. At this point, one might wonder just **why** God was so **upset** at idolatry. Accordingly, God showed Ezekiel what horrible evil the nation's **rulers** were doing back in Jerusalem, 8:1-11:3:
 - 1. God took Ezekiel in the spirit across the desert into the temple complex, Ez. 8:1-3b.
 - 2. There, Ezekiel saw these abominations tolerated or being practiced by the nation's spiritual leaders:
 - a. He saw an idol at the door of the inner gate of the Temple on the north side, 8:3c-6.
 - b. God had Ezekiel dig down into an inner hidden temple chamber to see the seventy elders of Israel privately practicing spirit worship to animal deities, 8:7-12.
 - c. God showed him a group of women at the temple door weeping for Tammuz, Queen of Heaven, 13f
 - d. Then the Lord displayed a group of 25 men near the temple altar who had their **backs** to God's **temple** while worshipping the rising **sun** in the east, Ez. 8:15-18.
 - 3. To show His fairness, God then cried for a man with an inkhorn to mark the foreheads of all the city's godly so they would be preserved alive during the invasion of judgment, Ez. 9:1-11. (This is where the marking of the 144,000 Jews in Revelation gets its historical origin!)
 - 4. God in all His glory is seen next lighting this wicked city with judgment fire, Ez. 10:1-22.
 - 5. Finally, Ezekiel saw Jaazaniah and Pelatiah, leaders in Jerusalem, counseling the city to go ahead and build houses as there was no captivity coming. This advice countered the messages of God's prophets like Ezekiel and Jeremiah, and so was the **WORST** evil yet, 11:1-3!
 - 6. Accordingly, God urged Ezekiel to prophecy against the city, 11:4-12. Ezekiel did this, v. 13a!
 - 7. In doing so, Ezekiel saw Jaazaniah die in judgment, and he was upset about it, Ez. 11:13.
 - 8. God encouraged Ezekiel that **HE** would revive Israel out of captivity in the end, 14-24.
 - 9. Encouraged at this hope and outraged at the evil among the rulers, Ezekiel prophesied these things, 25.

Lesson: *Though it is hard to believe that respected spiritual leaders can go apostate, God causes us to accept this fact by (1) permitting their abundant evil to be displayed before all so that we will separate from their sins, and (2) by encouraging us through Scripture that God will preserve His program in spite of the fall of such leaders!*