

EZEKIEL: BLOSSOMING DURING LIFE'S MOST SEVERE CRISES

Part X: God's Work To Perform Just Judgment Regardless Of Its Pain

(Ezekiel 21:1-32)

I. Introduction

- A. One of the challenges in the administration of discipline, whether it is performed in a family (parent and child), a church (church discipline), or by the government (the caning of an American in Singapore) is the tension between the **suffering** involved and the need for **justice**. We humans who must administer discipline often waver between justice and compassion because we are subject to such **pain** ourselves!
- B. Ezekiel received a lesson from God on facing this tension, and it addresses our concerns today!

II. God's Work To Perform Just Judgment Regardless Of Its Pain, Ez. 21:1-32.

- A. God predicted that the awful fall of Jerusalem would actually occur to fulfill His righteousness, 21:1-5.
 - 1. God told Ezekiel to predict the fall of Jerusalem and God's destruction of the "righteous" and the wicked, Ez. 21:1-5.
 - 2. Since God has gone to great lengths in chapter 18 to show that He does **not** judge the **righteous**, we believe that He is speaking **wryly**, telling Ezekiel that He will judge those who have **considered** themselves **innocent** of judgment when in **reality** they are as **guilty** as were their forefathers who sinned, Ez. 18 in light of last Sunday's lesson on Ez. 20!!
- B. Knowing the tension that such judgment bears against the price of human suffering, God revealed His keen insight into that suffering, exposing it through prophecy as follows:
 - 1. The Lord informed Ezekiel of his need to sigh with all of his might in grief for Jerusalem's fall, 21:6-7.
 - 2. In a picture of a sword sharpened for slaughter, God shared with Ezekiel the horrific details of that human price in suffering during this coming judgment, Ez. 21:8-16.
- C. **However, without releasing the tension between suffering and justice, God decided to fulfill His judgment anyway, Ezekiel 21:17-32.**
 - 1. God would **permit** this devastating trouble to occur until His **wrath** was **satisfied**, Ez. 21:17.
 - 2. In case people might think that they could **escape** such horrible judgment, God then revealed to Ezekiel how He would guide Babylon's Nebuchadnezzar to destroy all of the wicked parties, 21:18-32:
 - a. The Case of God's Sovereignly Directing Nebuchadnezzar to Destroy Jerusalem, Ez. 21:18-27:
 - b. The Case of God's Sovereignly Directing Discipline Upon Gleeeful Ammon, 21:28-32.

Lesson: God knows that His judgments produce great human suffering, and He sympathizes with the pain of that suffering. However, righteousness takes precedence over comfort, so judgment is a must IF there is no repentance. We should follow suit in our having to deal out discipline in the family, in the church or in government. It has to come if there is no repentance--it just has to come!