

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Ezekiel: Effective Ministry To The Spiritually Rebellious

Part V: God's Prophecies Of Judgment By Prophecies, Ezekiel 6:1-7:27

A. God's Predicted Judgment On Judah's Idolatrous Worship Sites

(Ezekiel 6:1-14)

I. Introduction

- A. Ministering to a very spiritually hard, rebellious people is a humanly overwhelming task, but God at times directs some of His servants to function in such a ministry.
- B. However, God equips His servants to serve Him well in such cases, and one such event involved Ezekiel's predicting God's judgment on Judah's idolatrous sites in Ezekiel 6:1-14.
- C. We view this passage for insight and application in ministering in our era (as follows):

II. God's Predicted Judgment Of Judah's Idolatrous Worship Sites, Ezekiel 6:1-14.

- A. The people of Israel under Joshua were to dispossess the Canaanites from the Promised Land because they worshiped false gods on "most of the mountains of Palestine" where there was "some kind of altar to Baal" or some other god, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Ezekiel 6:2; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1238. The Canaanites had also used ravines and valleys for performing impure religious rites and for the worship of the pagan god Molech (Jeremiah 7:31-32; Guthrie, Motyer, Stibbs, Wiseman, eds., The New Bible Commentary: Revised, 1970, p. 669)
- B. Thus, God called His people to holiness, that is, to separate from all such pagan places, that they (1) destroy their pagan altars (Deuteronomy 12:1-3) and (2) worship Him at a central place chosen by God instead of worshiping Him on any high place like the pagan Canaanites had done, Deuteronomy 12:4-5.
- C. However, the people of Israel failed to destroy such pagan high places, and in time they themselves worshiped there, so the Lord pronounced His judgment on Israel in relation to these high places in Ezekiel 6:1-14:
 - 1. God told Ezekiel to prophesy against these high places on the mountains of Israel in Ezekiel 6:1-2. Since some pagan religious rites and worship occurred in low places as well, Ezekiel's prophecy was also to include the ravines and valleys in Israel, Ezekiel 6:3; Ibid., Guthrie, Motyer, Stibbs, Wiseman.
 - 2. The Lord promised to send a sword on these places of false worship, that those involved in the worship along with the altars of these various places would together be destroyed, Ezekiel 6:3.
 - 3. Indeed, God promised to break the idolatrous images, desolate the altars, cast down the bodies of their worshipers beside the false idols and scatter their bones round about the altars, desecrating them, Ez. 6:4-7.
 - 4. However, a remnant would survive, being scattered among the nations, and they would loathe themselves for having participated in such false worship with false gods who could not save them from such a fate, and this remnant would realize that the Lord was the true God Whom they had offended because His prophecy that He would judge them this way had been fulfilled, Ezekiel 6:8-10.
 - 5. Clapping of the hands together signified either rejoicing or derision, depending on the context, so God called Israel's people not only to clap their hands, but also to stomp their feet in extreme derision and say, "Alas!" at all the wicked and detestable practices the people of Israel had performed at these idolatrous places to false gods in utter futility, Ezekiel 6:11; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1239.
 - 6. Those who were far off would die by disease, those who were near would be slain by the sword and those who remained in the city and were besieged would die by famine, indicating that trying to escape one fate would cause one to end up only facing another fate of God's wrath in judgment for idolatry, Ezekiel 6:12.
 - 7. The Lord predicted that His remnant would finally realize that He was the true Lord when, as predicted by Ezekiel, their slain would be among their idols that were helpless to save them, among their altars where they had vainly sought the protection of false gods in false worship and on every high hill, the tops of mountains, under every green tree and leafy oak where they had sought the help of false gods, Ezek. 6:13.
 - 8. God would thus make the land that had once been endowed with luxurious growth become desolate all of the way from Riblah (not Diblah as in the KJV) on the Orontes River in Aramea far north of Israel to the desert in the south, indicating the whole land of Israel would be devastated in judgment, Ezek. 6:14. (Ibid.)

Lesson: For violating God's Word to destroy the high places, but using them instead to worship false gods for protection and blessing, God would destroy the worshipers and all of their idolatrous places in just judgment.

Application: If God's Word directs us to separate from unrighteous things, we must do so to avoid His discipline.