

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Ezekiel: Effective Ministry To The Spiritually Rebellious Part XIII: Accepting The Point Of No Return In Facing God's Judgment (Ezekiel 14:12-23)

I. Introduction

- A. The idea that God will severely punish sin in His wrath is a hard subject for many people to accept today. The popular belief is a deity who has no wrath against anyone, that God is only a God of compassion.
- B. Ezekiel 14:12-23 presents the inevitability of God's judgment regardless if sinners involved are not convinced that God's judgment will actually fall. We thus view this passage for our instruction and edification:

II. Accepting The Point Of No Return In Facing God's Judgment, Ezekiel 14:12-23.

- A. As background for this section, we recall the Genesis 18:16-33 account where Abraham "bartered" God in behalf of his nephew Lot and family who lived in Sodom for God to spare their lives though He would destroy the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Lord let Abraham "barter" Him down to not destroying Sodom were just ten upright people to be found there, Genesis 18:23-33.
- B. However, signaling that Judah's sin exceeded that of Sodom and Gomorrah, God told His prophet Ezekiel that if a nation sins against the Lord, acting faithlessly in turning from Him to false idols, and God responded by breaking its food supply to send a famine on man and animals, though Noah, Daniel and Job were in the land, these giants of righteousness would deliver only themselves, not the rest of the land, Ezekiel 14:12-14.
- C. God's reference to these three men in the subject of His punishment rises from the fact that each righteous man had overcome some diversity in terms of God's punishment to save others, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1254:
 - 1. "Righteous Noah was able to save only his immediate family from judgment (Gen. 6:8-7:1)," Ibid.
 - 2. Righteous Daniel saved his friends from judgment when God gave him prophetic insight into the king's dream and could interpret it so that Babylon's wise men would not be slain, Daniel 2:12-24; Ibid.
 - 3. "Job was a righteous man who interceded for his three friends to save them from God's wrath after his own trials (Job 42:7-9)," Ibid.
- D. The Lord then added that if He caused wild animals to pass through the land under judgment to ravage it so that it would be unsafe for anyone to pass through it, though Noah, Daniel and Job were in the land, they would not deliver even their own children, but themselves alone, Ezekiel 14:15-16. The severity of this judgment contrasts with the lesser severity of Lot and his family, for God's angels saved Lot's daughters while losing his wife who was turned into a pillar of salt when she sinfully looked back at Sodom, Genesis 19:15-26.
- E. God then declared that if He brought a sword on the land in judgment, bringing an invading army to pass through the land to destroy both man and beast, though Noah, Daniel and Job were in the land, they would not be able to deliver their children by interceding for them, but save themselves alone, Ezekiel 14:17-18.
- F. The Lord added that if He sent an epidemic in the land under His punishment and poured out His wrath on it with blood to slay both man and animal, though Noah, Daniel and Job were in it, they would not be able to deliver even their children, but themselves alone, Ezekiel 14:19-20.
- G. Having established the fact that God's judgment was more sure on Israel than even the judgment of wicked Sodom and Gomorrah of antiquity, the Lord predicted more severity in Israel's judgment when God sent on it the four disasters of the sword, famine, wild animals and disease to destroy both man and beast, Ezekiel 14:21.
- H. Lest one think God's judgment was too severe on His people, the Lord predicted that when the few survivors of the Babylonian invasion in Judah arrived in Babylon among the other captives who had preceded them there, the Babylonian captives would be consoled regarding Jerusalem's disaster when they beheld the great wickedness of the land's few survivors, Ezekiel 14:22.
- I. The Hebrews in captivity would then realize that God had not leveled His severe judgment on the land of Israel without just cause, but that He had fairly punished them for their great wickedness, Ezekiel 14:23.

Lesson: *Israel's sin so exceeded that of even ancient Sodom and Gomorrah that unlike Abraham who could "barter" God to deliver those cities if just ten righteous people were left in them, even righteous Noah, Daniel and Job would not be able to intercede to deliver their own children, but only themselves, from God's judgment on Israel. Indeed, the great evil of Israel's survivors would vindicate God in His leveling such severe punishment.*

Application: *(1) There is a point of no return with God regarding sin, a point where His wrath will be expressed, so may we repent of any and all sin for blessing. (2) May we accept God's punishment as always being fair and just.*