

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Ezekiel: Effective Ministry To The Spiritually Rebellious

Part XLII: God's Punishment Of Sidon For Her Oppressive Contempt Of Israel

(Ezekiel 28:20-26)

I. Introduction

- A. One way one can sin is by harboring the ungodly attitude of disrespect or contempt toward another party.
- B. This was the great sin of the city/nation of Sidon against Israel, what is mentioned twice in the Ezekiel 28:20-26 prophecy about God's punishment of Sidon. We view this passage for our insight and application:

II. God's Punishment Of Sidon For Her Oppressive Contempt Of Israel, Ezekiel 28:20-26.

- A. Sidon "was 20 miles further up the Mediterranean coast" from Tyre, and it was closely associated with Tyre, possibly meaning that the sin of pride that afflicted Tyre also affected Sidon, Bib. Know. Com., O. T., p. 1284.
- B. However, pride is not mentioned in this prophecy against Sidon where "treating" Israel "with contempt" is noted in verses 24 and 26, and the word *shut* that Ezekiel used for this sin is an unusual Aramaic loan word that appears only in Ezekiel in all Scripture. (B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 1002)
- C. Accordingly, we view the prophecy against Sidon for the lesson God has on the sin of disrespect or contempt:
 1. The Lord had a message of punishment for Sidon because she had roused His just anger, Ezekiel 28:20-23:
 - a. God directed Ezekiel to "set his face toward" Sidon to prophecy judgment against her, Ezekiel 28:20-21.
 - b. Ezekiel was to inform Sidon that God was against her, that He would manifest His glory in her midst so that her people would realize that He was the Lord when He executed punishments on her, Ezekiel 28:22.
 - c. God's punishments would involve (i) a plague of illness and (ii) the slaying of Sidon's people in her streets as a foreign army would invade her and slay her people from all directions so that there was no escape for anyone, and the people of Sidon in the end would realize that He was the Lord, Ezekiel 28:23.
 2. As a result of Sidon's destruction, the house (or people) of Israel would no longer have a brier to prick or a thorn to hurt them among all their Gentile neighbors who had "treated" them "with contempt" (*shut*, see II,B above), Ezekiel 28:24a. Then even Israel herself would realize that God was the Lord, Ezek. 28:24b.
 3. This punishment and its effects prefigured the final deliverance of Israel from all of her Gentile oppressors in the yet future Messianic Kingdom, Ezekiel 28:25-26:
 - a. The Lord shifted from viewing His more immediate punishment of Sidon to the more distant deliverance of His people Israel from her enemies when He would gather them from the Gentile peoples among whom they were scattered in God's judgment, manifesting His holiness, His separation from sin in them in the sight of all the onlooking Gentile nations, Ezekiel 28:25a.
 - b. At that time, the people of Israel would dwell in their own land that He gave to His servant and Israel's forefather, the patriarch Jacob, Ezekiel 28:25b.
 - c. While dwelling in their land in that Kingdom, Israel's people would dwell securely, building houses and planting vineyards, endeavors that not only took time to accomplish but that also implied time for people to enjoy, a state of stability versus insecurely being uprooted by foreign invaders, Ezekiel 28:26a.
 - d. Israel's people would then dwell securely when God executed punishments upon all their Gentile neighbors who had "treated" them "with contempt" (*shut* again, see II,B and II,C,2 above), Ezekiel 28:26b.
 - e. Finally, at that time, the Chosen People of Israel would realize that God was their Lord, Ezekiel 28:26c.

Lesson: Besides the sin of pride in her close association with proud Tyre, Sidon had a deep disrespect for Israel, accordingly treating her with relentless contempt, a constant source of emotional pain to Israel like a prickling brier or an imbedded thorn. Understanding the suffering that facing incessant contempt produced on His people, God would punish Sidon severely with inescapable plague and the sword of an invading nation so that both the people of Sidon as they were being destroyed and the people of Israel would realize that God was the Lord Who had seen and had been angered at Sidon's contempt, and that He had punished it. This judgment also prefigured the time when God finally handles all the contempt Israel has faced at the hands of many Gentile nations down through history, punishing all the guilty parties and protecting and preserving Israel's honor in His Kingdom.

Application: (1) If we harbor an attitude of contempt or disrespect for any party, may we realize it is sin that God hates and that causes a lot of pain, and that God will severely punish this sin so that we must confess it to Him and turn from it. (2) If we ourselves face a party that treats us with contempt, may we not respond in hatred or be demoralized by the contempt, but be forbearing, knowing God in time will deal with the sin and the sinful party.