

The Book of Ezekiel (121-140)

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121

Where can we turn but to the Word of the Lord for the identification of the "bloody city." It was the responsibility of Ezekiel to convey to the city and its inhabitants the feelings of the Lord concerning them. As a prophet he was to rip the cover off of them and expose their wickedness. Eze. 22:2 This is to be repeated centuries later as the Lord exposes the very epitome of sin as revealed in a city called the "great city," Rev. 17:18 and BABYLON THE GREAT. Rev. 17:5 She is the apex of what the scriptures have termed a "bloody city" for she is literally drunken, has gone to great excess, with a spirit of persecution and execution against the saints of the Lord. They get their kicks, by murdering those who confess Christ as savior. Rev. 17:6 Stephen, the first martyr, proclaimed the crucifixion of Christ to be an act of murder. Acts 7:52 He also reminded them that they had a reputation of having persecuted and killing those sent to them by the Lord. From ancient times to the immediate future the attitude and actions of the city do not change.

The name, the nature and character of this harlot religion is clearly spelled out by the tattoo on her forehead. The forehead expresses the attitude, the religious disposition of those who bear a mark in their forehead. The high priest in Israel was to wear a plate of pure gold on his forehead upon which were inscribed the words, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. Ex. 28:36 By virtue of this golden sign their gifts were accepted by the Lord. The message of the Lord is a message of holiness. It is no surprise that we find markings in the forehead an outstanding feature and sign of the end of the age. Perhaps, even the modern day increase in those getting tattoo's is an indication of what is coming. There will be a two fold opportunity to receive a mark in the forehead in the very end of the age. We can choose the mark of holiness which will be applied to all those who love the Lord. Rev. 7:3, 9:4, 14:1, 22:4 This seal is the privilege of having His name, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, applied to our foreheads. Then there is the counterfeit, which will be forced on all who are not committed to Christ. The moment that it is applied that soul is eternally condemned. There is no further place of repentance or forgiveness for them. Rev. 13:16, 14:9, 20:4

The forehead of this city, depicted as a beautiful and stately woman, is that of a whore, refusing to feel the shame of her life style. Jer. 3:3 Because of her complete rejection of any feeling of guilt or remorse she is denied the blessings of the latter rain, i.e. revival and renewal of the Spirit of the Lord. This great harlot city denies having committed sin and iniquity. Prov. 30:20.

122

The woman of Revelation seventeen is also termed a MYSTERY. A mystery is something which is hidden from the general public but may be understood by the initiated. In this case it is the mystery of iniquity. 2 Thess. 2:7 A situation which will culminate in the revelation of the antichrist, of whom this woman is a paramour and comrade. Never is the mystery of iniquity manifest in more splendor and earthly beauty than in this woman. John is made to marvel at the eye appealing figure which he is beholding before him. A messenger of the Lord will illuminate John and unravel the mystery for him. Basically he gave him a history lesson leading up to the end of the age and then showed him the end of this beautiful creature. The very thing which she helped develop will be her undoing. In spite of her widespread power and influence over the leadership of the earth, she will be completely stripped of all of her beauty and in the end burned. Rev. 17:16.

BABYLON THE GREAT. It is clear that this name Babylon speaks of utter confusion. Rev. 17:5 The nations, the kingdoms and their leaders, at the end of the age are wiser than any which preceded them, but at the same time they are more insecure and confused as they seek peace for the world. Peace is a way of life that has been taken from the capability of mankind. Rev. 6:4 Not until the Prince of peace comes and establishes real peace, will there be peace again on this earth. Isa. 9:6-7 Babylon represents the world system which will be united under the hand of the antichrist. The ten kingdom empire is much greater than just the EU nations, it will embrace the entire world and include all nations. Any who resist will be destroyed. The message concerning her as found in the Book of Revelation is one of ultimate defeat. Rev. 14:8 Her reward will be equal to the measure of her fornication. Thus, she is made to drink of the fullness of the wine of the fierceness of the wrath of God. Rev. 16:19 She will be destroyed in one hour. An hour predetermined and marked on the calendar of the Lord. Rev. 18:10 Her hour of judgment will come upon her violently

and her destruction absolute. Rev. 18:21 She is destined to be filled with all that is unholy and ungodly. Rev. 18:2 That can only speak of a place of eternal punishment.

THE MOTHER. A system, denying the very existence of God can only reproduce unrestrained wickedness and ungodliness. Paul wrote, stating that earthly Jerusalem has as its example, Agar which speaks of bondage, and servitude for herself and her children. Gal. 4:25 Liberty and freedom are not to be found in that which is natural and of the earth. Real life and liberty are found in that which is above, the new Jerusalem. Gal. 4:26.

123

The title given this false church, MOTHER OF HARLOTS, is indicative of such things as false worship, false doctrine. Basically anything that leads one away from the truth which is found in the Lord Jesus. To limit this most impressive figure to one ecclesiastical body is spiritual blindness. This harlot church is all inclusive and will be comprised of every individual and all who are apostate and are willing to compromise their faith at the time of her formation. Yes, even those who come from a background of the most spiritual groups will be found in her as they are deceived by her beauty. Imagine, John for all his spiritual wisdom and understanding marveled and with great acceptance admired the beauty which his eyes beheld in her.

Rev. 17:6 The presentations of Satan are beautiful on the outside and to the sight of those who look upon his concoctions but inwardly they are filled with dead men's bones and all manner of impurity and corruption. Mt. 23:27.

We have a more sure word of prophesy upon which we may completely depend as we search for the truth as revealed in the Word of the Lord. Where better to turn than the prophets of old, those whom the Lord sent to speak to and warn the people of Israel. Isaiah declared that the city of faith had become a harlot, for they had turned from the truth and believed and worshipped gods other than the true and living God. Isa. 1:21 The rescue, the great advancement of life extended to them shows a woman of great beauty and majesty according to Ezekiel's prophecy in Ezekiel 16:4-16 The Lord made her to be a people of extensive beauty even to the point of perfection. The picture portrayed by Ezekiel rivals that which is seen by John pertaining to this

great whore. Both women with extensive and powerful appeal to the eye.

Beauty mixed with pride is deadly. Lucifer was and still presents himself in a manner which is very appealing to the eye, the natural man. The city of the Lord, Jerusalem, the very heart of Israel was glorified and beautified by the presence of the Lord until they mixed pure worship with that of the heathen around them. The blessings which the Lord had bestowed upon them they used in making idols of other gods and in this manner committed spiritual whoredom. Eze. 16:17-59 The sin of Israel and Jerusalem was no small matter in the sight of the Lord. He was surely greatly grieved with their rejecting Him and becoming so greatly embroiled in false worship. The very nations and the false gods to which they had become addicted would be the cause and executioner of their demise. Sin of any kind is destructive and deadly. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. Eze. 18:20.

124

In the prophetic declarations we discover the heart of the Lord and in particular His feelings toward the bloody city. The Lord, in the beginning, established laws for men to live by. The violation of these laws will determine the punishment. The prophet said that this city brings upon herself doom, by the shedding blood in her midst. Eze. 22:3 NIV That her time has come is self evident. The city has a history of being destroyed but they never seemed to learn from the destructions that came upon them. The Lord shows no pity as He inspired Ezekiel to describe the leadership as having the nature of wolves who tear apart the people for their own dishonest gain. Eze. 22:27 This bit of prophecy is not without its last day connotation. When we read the words of warning given by the Apostle Peter we find there are those who are also making merchandise of the people of the Lord, especially in our day. 2 Peter 2:3 Jeremiah likewise gave warning of false prophets who like trained puppets, would prophesy exactly what the people wanted to hear and the people loved it, without giving even a minimal common sense application to the ridiculous statements being made by these false prophets. Jer. 5:31.

The Lord was not yet finished but once again gave a graphic description of the city. This time likening it to a boiling pot whose scum (Heb. disease) or rust was not removed from it. Therefore, clear the

city of its inhabitants, bring them out one by one in the hands of an enemy. Eze. 24:6 There was no possibility of deliverance from their judgment. They had gone too far. The hand of the Lord was against them. They refused to follow the simple instructions of the Lord to pour out blood upon the ground and then cover it with the dust of the earth. Lev. 17:13 Contrarily, they displayed it upon a rock where it could be seen by all. The crucifixion of the Christ of God was demanded by the people of the city who boldly took upon themselves the accountability and placed the same curse upon their children, the full responsibility of the shedding of innocent blood. Mt. 27:25 Christ Jesus is that rock. 1 Cor. 10:4 The message of the power to redeem from sin is an open message, that redemptive blood being placed upon a rock visible to all.

Even to the bitter end the city, in its inherent shedding of blood, is the place where the final act of the shedding of the blood of prophets will take place. The two witness, who will spend the last three and one half years, prior to the coming of Christ, witnessing and declaring that Jesus is the Messiah in Jerusalem, will be slain as martyrs. The very last innocent blood to be spilled in the bloody city. Even to the end of the age its bloody reputation is maintained and upheld by its inhabitants. Rev. 11:7-13.

125

The sins and iniquities of Jerusalem are numbered by the Lord. According to the list given they had broken every tenet of the Law. There was little, if any unrighteousness that they were not involved in. Eze. 22:4-13 Because of their sinful manner of life they had become the laughing stock of the world. The heathen mocked and scoffed them because of the high and holy standard of the Law and their complete inability, or was it refusal, to live according to the will of their God.

The Lord is patient and longsuffering but there is a day when He will make manifest His retribution. Israel had come to that day and it would not be a happy one for them. How strong will they be? How much can they endure? Their ungodly actions would determine the extent of their punishment. They would be uprooted and removed out of their land. Stripped of their inheritance and scattered abroad. Eze. 22:14-16.

In the eyes of the Lord their filthiness had reached such a degree that He had lost all respect for them. They had become as dross, worthless and needed to be separated from that which was of value, by the fire sent from the Lord. They were to know the heat of His wrath against their sinful actions. They were to be reprocessed in the fiery furnace of the wrath of the Almighty until all the dross, even of the less significant metals was consumed. The fiery furnace of affliction is used by the Lord to punish and correct. That does not mean that everyone who goes through testing's and trials has sinned or failed the Lord. The furnace is used to separate and purify the metal making it fit for the Masters use. Eze. 22: 17-22.

Once again the Word of the Lord came to Ezekiel. Now, the prophecy is more specifically directed at the leadership of the people. The very ones who should have been declaring the holiness of the Lord were deeply involved in corruption. They had conspired together and were likened unto lions seeking and devouring the prey. Their responsibility for the salvation of the souls of men was corrupted to such a degree that they were accused of devouring the souls of men. Causing them to continue in sin until the fraudulent conditions which Ezekiel mentioned were the order of the day.

Eze. 22:25 These prophets white washed and condoned the sin of the people by prophesying to them from their own hearts and thoughts and not words which were from the Lord. Whatsoever is not of truth is a lie and they were declaring their, thus say's the Lord's, but the Lord had not spoken to them nor given them license to speak. Eze. 22:28 The prophet bears a great responsibility to declare truth.

126

There was to be no favored class of people among them. The Lord declared, through the words of the prophet that the spiritual leaders, the priests were also caught up in works of unrighteousness. The very ones who had a knowledge of the will and the Law of the Lord, were in violation of the righteousness of the Law. They were not afraid to change its precepts and to use the vessels and the holy places to fit their own needs and desires. They no longer made a difference between that which was holy and consecrated to the Lord and that which was unclean and unholy. They looked the other way at the desecration of the Holy days which had been established by the Lord for special days of worship unto Him. The Lord was dishonored among

them and very much felt their adverse attitude toward Himself. Eze. 22:26 This particular class of their society in that day could have made a difference by proclaiming the truth of the Word which, as priests, was a very essential part of their life and training for the priesthood. The responsibility for a standard of righteousness rested directly upon them. Even as today, the model of a righteous life and the teaching of the holiness of the Word is the requirement of the spiritual leaders of the church.

This segment of the book of Ezekiel is a display of the total degradation to which those who were responsible as leaders had deteriorated. The political arm of leadership was totally overwhelmed by a spirit of selfishness and greed. They were like wolves, pulling to pieces their constituents thus shedding the blood of the innocents. They were without compassion, interested only in their own gain as they deliberately set out to "feather their own nests," by means of dishonest gain. Eze. 22:27 Their actions were not ignored by the Lord. He is patient and longsuffering always giving mankind an opportunity to repent and change their ways. It is obvious as we read the words of this prophecy that the day of reckoning had arrived and they were about to pay the price of their wrong doings.

Not unexpectedly, the people followed the example of their spiritual and political leaders. They became fraudulent in their seeking of worldly wealth and their business activities were corrupt. The method used in seeking gain made no difference to them. Fraud was the order of the day. Extortion and oppression became a way of life. Robbery of the most delicate kind to the most demanding was practiced among them. Their society was completely out of control. The teachings of the Word which would have enabled them to have a peaceful and profitable life were completely ignored until they had deteriorated to such a degree that the Lord was about to show His judgments. Eze. 22:29 Does any of this sound familiar?.

127

The search of the Lord, for an intercessor, is an accomplished fact, however, He is still searching. The Messianic portion of this cry of the Lord has been totally satisfied in the person of the Lord Jesus. The only true, the great, the ultimate intercessor who stands constantly before the Almighty as the only advocate. Eze. 22:30 The Lord Jesus,

by virtue of His vicarious death and the shedding of His life giving blood, by His glorious resurrection and ascension unto the very throne of God has purchased the right to represent all sinners, who repent, before the tribunal of God. Rom. 8:34 Pardon and cleansing are assured all who will confess their sin unto the Lord Jesus.

1 John 1:9 The whole plan of salvation is based upon the intercession of the Lord Jesus. It is the heart, the very center of His life in the presence of His Father. No one else has such a high and holy standing in the presence of that which is eternal and heavenly. Heb. 7:25.

The scripture greatly emphasize the all important exaltation of the resurrected Christ to the right hand of God in various terms, leaving us with a full and complete knowledge of His current status and effort in the kingdom of God. The Lord Jesus is the one and only mediator standing directly between mankind and the living God. None other can replace Him in this all important position and advocacy. 1 Tim. 2:5 He is our one and only mediator, intercessor and reconciliation. There is absolutely no other person who can be the final voice and appeal before the throne of the Lord. Job found himself in a pitiful condition for he felt that he was without a daysman, an umpire, one who could present his cause before the Lord. Now, in the Lord Jesus we have one who bridges the gap. He takes our hand and the hand of the Father thus connecting us to our heavenly Father and making us to be one of the family. Job 9:33.

It must be difficult for an Attorney to defend a person who has committed a heinous crime. How can he help but be nauseated by the vileness of the person whom he has to defend. In our Advocate, the Lord Jesus Christ we have the very epitome of righteousness. It is the essence of His being and personality. Yet, He is called upon to defend the guilty, no question about their guilt, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of the Lord. Sin has no categories. It is not great or small. Black or white. Sin defies being divided into real bad and not so bad. All sin is alike to God. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. Sin to the righteous Son of God was vile, spiritual pollution and of such magnitude that it took His very life to redeem Himself and mankind from the consequences of sin. The Righteous One has fully taken the place of the unrighteous and now defends them, declaring their innocence which He purchased with His own blood. 1 John 2:1.

The prayer of intercession is not one which is unknown by those who have concern for and lead others in the way of the Lord. The patience of the Lord was thoroughly tried by the wayward actions of the children of Israel. So much so that the Lord asked Moses to step aside and He would thoroughly destroy the extremely disobedient nation and blot out any memory of them from the earth. Furthermore, He would make Moses to be fruitful and the descendents of Moses would be a mightier and a greater nation, the kind of people whom He desired to have. Deut. 9:14 Most definitely an exceptionally good offer had Moses desired to make a name and a kingdom for himself.

In the process of making intercession for the people Moses called upon them to take a stand for the Lord. He called for all those who were on the side of the Lord to come out from among the people and identify themselves and make a commitment to the Lord. Beautifully, those responding were of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of the priesthood. They were called upon to destroy the unbelieving and sinful from their midst. They also were to consecrate themselves unto the Lord and Moses would go and make atonement for their sin. Ex. 32:26-30

When Moses went before the Lord it was with words of confession. The people have sinned a great sin. Then he prayed for the Lord to be merciful and forgive their sin. However he did not stop there, he placed himself in the position of becoming a sacrifice. He went to the extreme by requesting that his name be blotted out of God's book of life, if He could not forgive the people of their sin. Ex. 32:31-32 That has to be the ultimate of sacrifice and intercession. It shows the great love that Moses had for the people. How many today would place themselves in such a situation in order to see a people who were so disgusting to the Lord delivered from judgment. The Apostle Paul had such compassion for Israel that he was willing to be accursed, cut off, from Christ if only his people could be saved. Rom. 9:3 The history of the early church tells us that not all Israel were saved. They came to Christ as individuals and not in mass. It will be the same in the end of the age, salvation is a personal matter, not a national issue. The prayer of intercession has a great effect on the heart of the Lord. The majority of Israelites were spared from annihilation, only those who had sinned and obviously had not repented would be blotted out of God's book of life. Committing oneself totally to the Lord in the prayer

of intercession such as we find here, will yield the good results and end with the souls of sinners being saved.

129

The dangers of an independent, self motivated spirit are given adequate attention in Ezekiel's prophetic utterances. Those who are persistent in going their "own way" by denying the Word of the Lord will pay the consequences and be recompensed according to, "their own way." Eze. 22:31 Paul likewise spoke along these lines when he stated what is a very evident fact of nature, that whatsoever a man sows that will he also reap. Gal. 6:7 The consequences of natural life speak volumes to us if we but have ears to hear, both to the natural and the spiritual nature of man. As certain as the rising of the sun, what we sow is exactly what we reap. Sow to the carnal nature and the crop which is reaped is corruption and eternal separation from the Lord. Be wise and sow to the Spirit and gather in a great and eternal harvest of the goodness and mercy of the Lord. Gal. 6:8 It is an indelible law of sowing and reaping which rules on earth and is applied to every facet of our lives.

They WERE mine. Eze. 23:4 A glimpse into the emotions of one who had loved with the strength and purity which only may be found in the Lord. We cannot help but feel the emphases made in the past tense, a situation which had been but does not now exist. The introduction is made of two women, the daughters of one mother. Their lives were spent in spiritual compromise, which in this case and in the eyes of the Lord was paramount to living the life of the worst kind of a harlot. Their violation was of a spiritual nature. The history of their sin started in Egypt. Eze. 23:1-3 In their exodus from Egypt not much is said about the religious mixture which was prevalent among them. However from Ezekiel's words we know that the Lord was greatly displeased with the situation. Nevertheless, He rescued them from their plight. Joshua, in rehearsing their history and presenting the will of the Lord to them, urged them to destroy and cease to worship the gods of Egypt. Josh 24:14.

In Egypt, they were still one people but the Lord looking down the corridor of time saw the division which would ultimately come to pass when the ten tribes would leave Judah and form a northern kingdom of Samaria. In their actions and sin there was no difference between

them, both were considered by the Lord to be harlots. Sisters, identical in every sense of the word. How extraordinary and amazing is the love of the Lord. Knowing their sin while they were in Egypt and knowing their reactions to Him in the future, He still delivered them from Egypt and brought them unto Himself. He was, and always is, ready to forgive and forget as only He can. What a golden opportunity was given them to have the kingdom of God on earth, but they foolishly persisted in their sinful ways and lost out.

130

Aholah, Israel, Samaria, the northern kingdom, the ten tribes, various titles given Israel after they separated from Judah and Jerusalem. These names are indicative of their spiritual harlotry in serving the gods and idols of the heathen surrounding them. While the meaning of the names is uncertain, the meaning of the name given by Unger, "her own tent" is interesting. It speaks of Israel's attempt to establish the city of Samaria as their holy city, so that their people would not go to Jerusalem at the time of the feasts. It became a center of idolatrous worship of a number of false gods. The worship of Baal became the order of the day. 1 Kings 16:32 Her religious liberality and willingness to accept any and all gods became the very source of her down fall. Her sin established her judgment. Eze. 23:5-10

Aholibah, "my tent is in her." Jerusalem was the center, the heart beat of the kingdom established by the Lord and was meant to be the place of His presence. Rather than glean knowledge and wisdom from the unfortunate circumstances of Samaria, Judah plunged deeper yet into the depths of iniquity. The description of their lewd actions and licentious living surpasses anything used to describe the situation in Samaria. They greatly moved the heart of the Lord with anger and jealousy. "For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous is a jealous God." Ex. 34:14 Consequently the Lord stated publicly that those who have been her lovers would become their destroyers. The Lord set the consequences of His jealousy against them by removing all protection and restraint of evil against them by others, thus opening the door for a floodgate of nations to rise up against them. The picture is not a pretty one. Their lovers would become their enemies until none cared for them.

The righteous and just anger of the Lord was about to break in on them, in particular because they had followed in the path of their sinful sister, Samaria. Therefore, they were to be given the cup of iniquity which had been the lot of Samaria. The words of the prophet Ezekiel are strong words which declare full and absolute judgment against the nation of Judah and the city of Jerusalem. The accusation of the Lord against them was that they had purposely forgotten Him and cast Him behind their back. No wonder such tremendous anger arose in His heart. The recompense of the Lord against them would be according to the measure of their sin. They would have to pay the full penalty. Through the words of the prophet the Lord poured out the innermost feelings and emotions of His heart due to their actions. He does not take lightly the waywardness of His people. Eze. 23:11-49

131

Prophecy by parable. Ezekiel was commanded to speak a parable to those in captivity. However what he was to declare was already in the process of fulfillment. Ezekiel was in Babylon but spoke of the events which, at that moment, were taking place in the attack against Jerusalem. Eze. 24:1-2 The parable was to convey the punishment of a rebellious people who had grossly and consistently sinned against their God. The dealings of the Lord with them were based upon their resolute and continuous resistance against the will of the Lord. The parable depicted complete destruction of the city and its inhabitants. Eze. 24:3-5

We do ourselves a grievous injustice by picking and plucking positive scriptures pertaining to Jerusalem while ignoring the negative. The parable given to Ezekiel most definitely emphasizes the negative. It shows the true character of the city and their rejection of the message of the prophets and of the murder of some of them. The responsibility of the uncovered blood of these martyrs was referred to by the Lord Jesus in parabolic form. In the parable, Jesus also predicted His own death at the hands of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Mark 12:1-9 The blood of these innocents was not covered by dust but the blood was displayed upon a rock. Eze. 24:7 That rock is Christ Jesus. 1 Cor. 10:4 The precious blood of Christ has a twofold purpose. When we accept His atonement we are cleansed by His blood. To reject Him is to heap the blame and responsibility of His death upon ourselves. Acceptance or rejection determines our eternal status.

A great fire to be prepared for the destruction of the scum, that the filthiness of the city might be destroyed. Any real and permanent move of the Spirit must have, as a foundation, the destruction of all scum and filthiness. Nothing is to be withheld from the burning, purging power of the fire of the Spirit. Too much of what we see today is expressed in the words, " I have purged thee, but thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged anymore, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee." Eze. 24:13 Cleansed but not cleansed. Given the opportunity for a transformation but afterward continuing in the same worldly pattern. Prior to the last day revival, expect the fire of the Lord to burn furiously among the true members of the body of Christ. John the Baptist predicted that the Lord Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and FIRE. Luke 3:16 The cleansing, purging effect of that baptism being the most necessary element of the blessed experience. A spiritual movement that has a foundation of having had its start with repentance and purification by the fire of the Spirit will produce a holy and righteous last day church.

132

Of this be certain, the Lord will finalize every promise, negative and positive that He makes. Eze. 24:14 There was to be no way that His words to them would in anyway be altered. He is not a man, that He should lie. What He has spoken He will do. Num. 23:19 Just think of it, all that He has declared pertaining to the end of the age will be fulfilled exactly as He has caused it to be recorded. He is not slack concerning His promises. 2 Peter 3:9 Tomorrows news cast has already been recorded and printed in the Word of the Lord.

The prophet was called upon to participate in the Word of the Lord to Israel in a very personal manner. As a witness to Israel, Ezekiel's wife was to die suddenly and he was not to mourn her death according to that which was customary. Mind you, the Lord knew the love that Ezekiel had for his wife. She was the desire of his eyes. The very best, the dearest to his heart. It is not unusual to have to pay a great price while serving the Lord. He was not to mourn nor cry tears. Contrary wise he was to conduct himself in a festive way. Eze. 24:16-17 Thus, Ezekiel prophesied to the people in the morning and in the evening his wife died. Eze. 24:18

As much as we might want to question the ways of the Lord we have to know that He does all things well. Many times those things which

take place in our life we do not understand why and we question them. Ultimately, and it could be years later, we see the wisdom of the Lord and are content with what has taken place. Every adversity has its blessing when we walk with the Lord. The people recognized that this was a sign from the Lord to them and approached Ezekiel for an understanding, an interpretation of what the Lord was saying to them. Eze. 24:19

A response from the Lord was not long in coming. He was about to take from them His sanctuary, any indication of His presence among them. They desperately clung to the history of the revelation of the glory of the Lord in both the tabernacle and the temple. They had not seen that glory themselves because of their worship of other gods, but they knew the history which was their pride and joy. Their youth would fall by the sword, but in it all, they would not be able to mourn and would react even as Ezekiel. However, they would pine away, or be filled with unreleased grief. The personal experience of Ezekiel was to be the national experience of Israel. Their strength, their joy, their glory was to be taken from them. Any presence of the Lord completely removed from them. Ezekiel was a living example to them of their own future. Eze. 24:20-27.

133

The Introduction of seven nations, who were the enemies of Israel, and rejoiced greatly at Israel's punishment by the Lord. The first prophecy is against Ammon. Eze. 25:2 They were a nation who were the descendents of Benammi, the son of Lot. Gen. 19:38 Their punishment was because of their rejoicing over the tragedy which had come upon Israel. Not an unusual reaction when we see our enemy in dire straits but in this case a reaction of joy because of the punishment of the Lord against His people. They mocked, they exulted with great joy by clapping their hands and stamping their feet while rejoicing with all their hearts over the catastrophe which had happened to Israel. Eze. 25:3,6 Because of their attitude they were to experience the invasion of their land and have to stand by as their enemy partook of the labor of their hands. The prophecy called for ultimate destruction of their existence as a nation. Eze. 25:6-7 There is a lesson to be learned here and that is not to rejoice over the catastrophes of others. In particular, those of the household of faith whom we may feel have wronged us in some fashion.

The second nation mentioned is that of Moab. Moab, like Ammon a son of Lot, both were born of incest. They despised the house of Judah and in their mockery of them declared that they were no different than the other nations about them. In so doing, they belittled the Lord. The Lord let them know through Ezekiel that He would prove Himself to Moab by the judgments which He would bring upon them. Eze. 25:8-11 Most unfortunately, their knowledge of the Lord was not to be after salvation but in judgment and proof of His authority over all. After all, He is the Lord and is to be revered in all of His actions. Even when He displays His displeasure by an act of correction.

Edom was next in line for their actions against the house of Judah. Edom is Esau, and was to know the hand of the Lord against him because of his having taken vengeance against Jacob. His offences were many against his brother and his desire for revenge raged within his breast. Eze. 25:12 In this instance, the nation to be used in punishing Edom was Israel itself. Their overwhelming of Edom was according to the measure of the anger and the fury of the Lord against Edom. Eze. 25:13-14 We have not yet seen the final act of this conflict for it is a situation which has been carried over into modern times and has a definite conclusion in the end of the age.

134

The Philistines, ancient enemies of Israel, were in line for a visitation of the Lord in an act of punishment. Eze. 25:15-17 They were a people who carried a grudge over the past conflicts which frequently occurred between themselves and Israel. The cause of the hand of the Lord being manifest against them is one which is all too common to mankind and is very much worthy of our heart felt consideration. It is described as being an old hatred, which is listed as one of the works of the flesh. Gal. 5:20 Hatred is a real spiritual thief and will rob a person so affected by it of their peace of mind, soul and spirit. It is inevitable and very definite, that in this life, we will have someone do something, purposely or inadvertently, large or small at which we take offence. The wise, will forgive and go on. The foolish will be a Philistine and act from a standpoint of revenge. Waiting for that moment when their desire for vengeance is satisfied. The mean time, their spiteful heart is controlling every avenue, every association of their life. Their life is filled with bitterness and broken relations with family and those who would be their friends.

Tyrus was also in line for chastisement from the Lord for they rejoiced in the defeat of Jerusalem. Being as they were, a city of great commerce they knew that the trade which had been going to Jerusalem would now come to them. Eze. 26:2 In the following chapters of Ezekiel, Tyrus and its king are portrayed in a manner that foreshadows the events which take place at the end of this age. Its name is significant for Tyrus, means rock. It was so named because of its position on the coast. It was a rock, an island whose city spread out also to the mainland. It was the consensus of its inhabitants that it was impregnable and was well fortified. The sentence of the Lord against Tyrus was that of utter defeat and the complete destruction of all of its buildings until it was to be used as a place to spread out their fishing nets for drying. The description of the attack of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon and the methods to be used in the defeat of Tyrus is prophesied by Ezekiel. Eze. 26:3-15

The prophecy of their coming defeat and fall contains foreshadowing's of what will transpire prior to the coming of the Lord Jesus. The effect of that which was destined to take place in the downfall of Tyrus would expand over the whole area like the sound waves of a mighty explosion. We note in particular that the leaders, the kings of other nations who were associated with Tyrus would come and mourn together over the loss of the great city. Eze. 26:15-16 .

135

A lamentation made for Tyrus by world leadership. Leaving their thrones they sit upon the ground in abject fear and trembling. They are stunned that such a formidable fortress could be overwhelmed and utterly destroyed. These in mourning are utterly dismayed. Eze. 26:17-18 Thus, what was to happen to Tyrus was a type, a foretelling of the destruction which will come upon the city of the antichrist in the end of the age. She is to be the center of every activity known to man. The most outstanding being the religious and political; power and authority. Along with that will be her complete control of all of the merchandising of the world. She will completely control the monetary world. Could there be a reason for the emphases found in the church today to seek after the wealth of this world? When the world order gives control of the world finances over to this political/religious city, it will be Babylon. Rev. 17:5.

The Babylon of the book of Revelation is not Rome. Satan is clever in misdirecting the doctrines of the church. That does not exclude Rome from being a part of the last day order. There is however one city that is considered to be a holy city by the major religions of the world. To the Jew it is their homeland and most definitely a holy city. To the Roman church it is holy, to the Protestant churches it is holy, to the Moslem it is a holy city. There is no way that this could be just circumstantial. Consider such a similarity as this, "I will bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee." Eze. 26:19 Sounds like the tsunami of all tsunamis. The book of Revelation will identify the waters as the "peoples and multitudes, and nations, and tongues," (Rev. 17:15) of the earth all of whom the Lord will inspire to also be the destructive factor used in the destruction of the great harlot city.

The political ruling force of that day will be the ten kingdom empire. An amalgamation of ten spheres of influence, such as, NATO, EU, etc embracing every nation of the world and each group of nations appointing one who will be their head. The current EU is quickly outgrowing the ancient Roman empire so is not the leading factor. There will be a split between the religious and the political forces of that day and the religious will be utterly destroyed by the ten horns or the ten kingdom empire.

Rev. 17:16 The cause of her downfall will be the fact that she will at sometime in the last day order of things have the absolute control over the political ruling body.

Rev. 17:18 Her desire to control is a part of the cause of her downfall.

136

Tyre is much more than just a city. As Ezekiel continued to prophecy against them he eventually will show to us that Tyre is used as a type of the antichrist. The very fact that Tyre means rock, should alert us to the fact that what we read in Ezekiel is something more than just a statement of ancient history. Where there is an article of true value, there is bound to be a counterfeit. The true Rock, the Rock of the Lord is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He who was the source of living waters for Israel in their desert experience was the Christ of God. 1 Cor. 4:10 He is the rock and foundation of the church. Peter was but a pebble, Christ is the Rock upon which the church is founded. Mt. 16:18 That Rock which is a firm, solid foundation for some, is at

the same time a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense for others. They stumble at the Word, which is the rock of our foundation. They are disobedient to the Word therefore must pay the price of their rejection of the Word of life, the Lord Jesus. 1 Peter 2:8 Peter declared that this is their appointment, their God designed destiny.

Ezekiel showed the ultimate designation of those who reject the Lord and declared it to be the downward, into the pit. Eze. 26:20 The first experience of the children of Israel with the pit was at the time of the sin of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, an act of absolute rebellion. An example of the enemy within the camp which will climax with the revelation of the antichrist who will come out of the church. Num. 16. The words of Moses were fulfilled and these families and all that was theirs, perished when the ground opened up and they were plunged into the pit. Num. 16:28-34 Tyrus was to be cast into the pit with the people of old time. Called the lower parts of the earth, into a state of desolation, loneliness and solitude. No one is friendly in hell.

The first rebellious act was committed in the very throne presence of the Lord. A created being named Lucifer, (morning star, brilliant star), son of the morning or dawn. How very close he was to Deity may be noted by the name applied to the Lord Jesus. Jesus is the dayspring from on high. Luke 1:78 The day star. 2 Peter 1:19 Lucifer was the very closest, of the highest rank, of all of the created heavenly host, to the Lord. He is a perfect example of the theme played out throughout the Word of the Lord showing us that it is, the enemy which is within, that is the greatest danger. Hear the Messianic cry in David's Psalm. It was not an enemy without but a man, his own equal. Ps. 55:9-15 His description of the city which could only be Jerusalem, was one filled with turmoil and wickedness. Therefore judgment is passed and the cry is for death to seize them and plunge them quickly into the grave and hell.

137

The statements made by the Lord, as recorded in the Word, may be directed at a particular person or country and be like a flat rock thrown upon smooth water, skip many times, and strike many places. Thus we read that, "The Lord sent a word into Jacob and it has lighted upon Israel." Isa. 9:8 The sentence upon Tyre reaches down to the end of the age and we see its fulfillment in the book of Revelation in the

opening of the bottomless pit and the subsequent judgments which are released upon the earth under the impact of the first woe. Rev. 9:1-11.

Consider this carefully, the individual to whom the key to the bottomless pit is given is a fallen star. Rev. 9:1 The fellow named Lucifer is stated to have fallen from heaven. Where he had held that high and important position as the son of the morning, or the morning star, or son of the dawn. Isa. 14:12 NIV Jesus referred to the fall of Satan as a great display of lightening or like the streak of lightening, a fiery object, or a comet across the sky. Luke 10:18 In spite of his fall, Satan has access to heaven and the throne of the Lord. He is occupied 24/7 with gossip, innuendo, and most unfortunately with facts of the weakness and sins of the children of the Lord. There, in the throne presence of the Lord, he is accusing them day and night. Rev. 12:10 That eliminates any personal attention that we think we may have had from him. As individuals, we are not that important to him. Jesus had a personal encounter with him. Mt. 4:1-11 The bride of Christ will be confronted by him. He will appear with the spirit and nature of a beast, the dragon. The Word of the Lord, the sword of the Spirit, will overcome every attempt of the devil to destroy the bride and her son. Isa. 27:1 In spite of all his powers, Satan is a weakling and a constant failure and is destined to be thrown into the bottomless pit. Incidentally, what an obnoxious figure he must be to the Lord as he blabbers all the wrong doings of the people of the Lord. As if though the Lord doesn't know all about us.

Warning, though the devil is seen as a beast, and he is, he is not ugly nor frightening in his appearance. Remember, he is like a star. Tyrus, as a type of Satan said, "I am of perfect beauty." Eze. 27:3 Furthermore, the Apostle Paul warned the church of one of the tricks of Satan in transforming himself into an angel (messenger) of light. 2 Cor. 2:14 That places him right in the midst of the church and fulfilling the office of a messenger of truth, but he is a liar and the father of all lies and liars, and has been so from the beginning. John 8:44 The watering down of the truth of the Word too often originates from the pulpit. The enemy is within the church, as was Judas.

138

Lucifer was a being created to be beautiful. He still retains that

outward appearance and will approach the church through false prophets who appear to the church in sheep's wool, but inwardly they are wolves of a fierce nature who will, rend, tear and consume the sheep. Mt. 7:15 Everything created by the Lord has its own personal beauty. He created all things to be beautiful. At the same time, fashioning in man a strong desire for things eternal which can only be satisfied by knowing the Lord. Regardless of what the unsaved person does to try to satisfy that emptiness, it can only find complete satisfaction in the Lord Jesus Christ. Eccl. 3:11

The Lord beautified Zion, the city of Jerusalem with His presence in the temple. She was to be known as the perfection of beauty because of the glory of the Lord which had been revealed in Solomon's temple. Ps. 50:2 The city is no more beautiful than its occupants. Jesus in an address made in the temple, in Jerusalem, called the scribes and Pharisees hypocrites, white washed graves filled with the decaying bones of the dead and all manner of impurity. Mt. 23:27 The city is composed of the people, they establish the nature, the character and the reputation of the city. Jesus spoke of its desolation because of the ungodly deeds committed by its leaders and occupants. Mt. 23:38 The prophets of old aptly convey the feelings of the Lord toward the city and any attempt to rebuild or re-establish an old testament temple with its manner of worship is contrary to His will. Isa. 66:3

The Lord stated that the beauty of Zion had departed from her. Lam. 1:6

Furthermore, His anger had been displayed by covering the daughter of Zion with a cloud of His anger and casting down from heaven to earth the beauty of Israel. Thus turning His back on His footstool and not being found in their midst. Lam. 2:1 "The perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth," the city of Jerusalem has become an object of mockery. Men clap their hands, they hiss and wag the head at her. Lam. 2:15 The beauty which had been hers was completely removed by the Lord. That beauty and the fullness of the glory of the Lord has been conveyed to the New Jerusalem.

That which is called the holy city and is clothed with a bridal gown of perfect glory. Rev. 21:2 she is the church, the Bride who will be manifest in the end of the age. A glorious church. Eph. 5:27 Of this we may be certain, there is no more glorious and majestically clothed Bride to be found in the word of the Lord than the most beautiful

woman of Revelation twelve. The absolute fullness of the sun like glory is within, in her spirit being and is made known on the outside like the shining of the sun. The Sun of righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ dwells within her and she is totally His. Mal. 4:2.

139

Great emphases is made to make certain that all who read understand, that among other things, Tyrus was a great merchandising center. A long list is given of the cities and countries with which the conducted business. The articles that were bought and sold in Tyrus were of a great number. It would appear that anything of value could be purchased there. Eze. 27:4-24 An extremely impressive picture of their ability to attract the merchants and the goods of the world to their city is to be found listed here by Ezekiel.

It is of great importance that we properly identify the city of whom Tyrus

Is a type. To do so we turn to the book of final things, the book of Revelation. In the eighteenth chapter of Revelation we find the prophecy of a great end time city. She is called Babylon the great but that speaks to her nature, her conduct, her attitude and not to the physical city of Babylon. The scriptures themselves will identify the city which is to be the last day Babylon.

As a beginning, consider the statement found in Rev. 18:24, "In her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." Using such a strong statement of identification, Stephen, the first martyr, made it plain that they were responsible, not only for the killing of the prophets but also of the Just One, the Lord Jesus, their Messiah. He certainly did not mince words but speaking in a positive manner called them betrayers and murders. Acts 7:52 Jeremiah was commissioned to carry a message to Jerusalem (Jer.4:2) in which the accusation is made that they were guilty of the shedding of the blood of those who were innocent of any wrong doing. Most definitely a prophecy of the actions that would be carried out by the leaders and the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the crucifixion of Christ. Jer. 4:32 What more enlightening words could we require of the Lord than the statement made by none other than the Lord Jesus when He said to the city, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee." Mt. 23:37 Because of

their ungodly actions and deeds they will in the end of the great tribulation find that the Lord will turn the waters of this world into blood. An act which is proclaimed to be just and true for by that time the false church, Babylon will have martyred multitudes. Such a judgment is proper for by their deeds they have made themselves worthy of what they will receive. Rev. 16:6 John saw her, as we too must see her, as one who was overwhelmed with a spirit of slaughter, an uncontrollable urge driving them to commit murder. Rev. 17:6 .

140

The similarities between, Tyrus as recorded in Ezekiel twenty seven and those found in relationship to the last day Babylon in Revelation eighteen are many. Isaiah is prophesying in a last day vein of thought when he places the responsibility for the coming judgment of the joyous city directly on the Lord. From the strength of his statement we may be assured that the punishment of Babylon is positive. "The LORD of hosts has purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth." Isa. 23:9 The Lord hates pride, particularly the pride which is manifest by Satan and his cohort, the antichrist. Rev. 13:4 Isaiah also spoke of an impending day of reckoning and urged the people to enter into the rock to hide. Which is amplified by the Lord Jesus in Luke 23:30 Then its final act is found in the book of Revelation. Rev. 6:15-17 The Lord is so faithful and in so many ways warns mankind of the things which are coming upon the earth and then gives instructions showing the way of escaping them.

The crux of the downfall of Tyrus, Babylon, Lucifer, the antichrist and everyone associated with them, human or angelic is seen in Ezekiel twenty eight. The root cause is a heart which is haughty and lifted up or filled with conceit and personal pride. The prince of Tyrus, in his excessive self-esteem proclaimed himself to be a God. Eze. 28:2 Anyone making such a statement is completely void of any understanding of who or what God really is. In essence he was declaring his throne to be the throne of God. His attitude and words may well be compared to activity which went on in the presence of the Lord before creation. Lucifer is noted for his proclamation of independence and purpose of ruling over the Lord. His will, expressed in five statements is recorded in Isa. 14:13-14

This spirit and conduct is to be manifest in the antichrist when he comes on the scene. Far too much attention is given to political and religious figures of this world, where men have declared them to be the antichrist, only to be proven wrong. The antichrist is one like Judas. An insider, the enemy within. He will originate from being one of the leaders of a last day revival. He will demonstrate the same spirit found in Lucifer and follow his pattern of conduct by exalting himself and proclaiming that he is God. Note carefully, he sits in the temple of God. He was a member of the body of Christ, the temple of God, until pride took over. 2 Thess. 2:4 John gives reference to a separation which took place in his day. 1 John 2:19 The same will occur in the end of the age and will culminate in the revelation of the antichrist.

(continued in 141-160)