

Ezekiel 14 – The Remnant

By Holly Effiom

VV1-3

- Is this the first time the elders have come to sit before Ezekiel?
- What does it mean to sit “before” a prophet?
- What happened last time the “elders” sat before Ezekiel? Eze 8:1-3
- Did God seem particularly joyful, happy, irritated at that time? How can you tell?
- What did God show Ezekiel at that time?
- What is God’s perspective on their actions?
- What sense do you get about God’s mood now?
- What does God ask? Why would he ask this?
- What did we learn about the “elders” of Jerusalem from chapter 8?

LESSON: The first time we read about the elders sitting before Ezekiel was in chapter 8, when God showed up and grabbed Ezekiel by the hair to carry him to Jerusalem to witness the abominations taking place in the temple. I got the sense, at that time, that God might’ve been irritated by something... perhaps something Ezekiel was doing offended Him. The Bible does not go into that detail.

Let’s recall what we learned from Ezekiel 8 – all the “elders” of Jerusalem had corrupted themselves; the women (the wives and mothers) were mourning for Tammuz; and the 25 men (the sons and future elders) turned their backs on the temple in order to worship the sun in the east. Yes, there was an “image of jealousy” standing at the entrance of the temple; however, it was a mere *symptom* of the profound disease of abominations taking place on a deeper level within the temple itself.

In our study of chapter 11, which brought us back to Eze 8:16 to get a better look at the ring-leaders among the young men – sons of the “elders” – that turned their backs on the good their fathers had taught them, in order to worship the sun; We proposed that the repetition of this scene implied that the same abominations – what Daniel 9:27 calls the abominations that bring desolation – will be done in that end-time Gentile world power.

These first few verses of Eze 14 teach us what it means to sit before a prophet – it’s to make inquiry of God. These “elders” of the captivity are now sitting before Ezekiel, and God asks, skeptically, “... Should I be enquired of at all by them?” Are these the same “elders” that had corrupted themselves in Eze 8, and *now*, they want to hear from *God*?

VV4-6

- What is God’s word to these elders?
- Does it sound as if it would be an uplifting experience?
- In what way will God answer these ones?
- What about these men will cause God to respond in this fashion?
- Is it only these men who are estranged from God?
- What caused this estrangement?
- Is there still an opportunity for people to turn from their idols?
- What must they do?

LESSON: Under most conditions a child of God would be happy for the promise to hear from God in response to their petition, but these are not ordinary times, and what God promises here does not portend good things because the people are not coming right before Him. Ezekiel makes it plain here that

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they are first consulting and consorting with their idols before coming before God – “sitting before the prophet” – and, they don’t seem to see a problem with this at all!

VV7-11

Who is the stranger that “...sojourneth in Israel”? Ex 12:48-51

Will the “stranger” that sojourns with Israel exempt from the judgment of God?

Why is God mentioning them now?

What will God’s response be to those who come before Him willfully steeped in their idolatry?

What if the prophet proposes to speak to these ones on behalf of God?

Who will be the cause of the deception?

What will God do to that prophet?

Will the punishment of the prophet be different from the idolater who seeks him out?

What is the goal in the punishment?

VV12-14

To whom is Ezekiel’s message being directed in this section? Is this the same “land” discussed in Ezekiel 7:7?

To whom was he speaking before? V4

In what way can the land trespass against God “grievously”?

What is the message?

In what way will the land suffer when the “...staff of bread...” is broken?

Will Noah, Daniel, or Job successfully intercede on behalf of the people?

Who would they be able to save?

What do we know about Noah? Gen 6:8 Why would God mention his name here?

What do we know about Daniel? Dan 9:3-19 Why would God mention his name here?

What do we know about Job? Job 42:7-9 Why would God mention his name here?

LESSON: Verses 9-10 begs the questions: How did having the “elders” hanging on Ezekiel’s every word affect *Ezekiel*? Could it be that that attention from those “esteemed” with the community went to Ezekiel’s head? Remember how angry Ezekiel was when God showed up in Chapters 1-3?

The first time the elders dropped in to enquire of God, Ezekiel had been snatched up by his hair and taken to Jerusalem to discover the abominations of “elders” – he didn’t know them at that time. And I wonder now, could these sitting before him now possibly have been among the 25 men that had been worshipping the sun in Eze 8... all grown up? *Now*, God simply tells Ezekiel these men have a nerve to be asking Him *anything*!

In this section of scripture, God draws a distinction between the groups to whom He is speaking. In the first part of the chapter, He directs His comments toward “...Every man of the house of Israel...” V4; however, in V13, He directs His comments toward the “land”. Remember in Ezekiel 7:7, He made this distinction also. It was in that section of scripture that we proposed that the message was being directed to that final, end-time Gentile world power, and I believe that this section of scripture confirms that understanding for today.

In mentioning Noah, Daniel, and Job by name, God is calling to remembrance these men’s stories and how they apply to the moment:

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Noah built the ark that ensured a future for man and animal kind in the earth after the flood. It is noteworthy to remember that Noah was not Jewish – there were no “Jews” until after Abraham – he would’ve been considered a stranger among those of the covenant. However, similar to the Jew, Noah was a man of faith living among faithless people – the rebellious angels that had not kept their first estate were producing children in the earth, too. Furthermore, even if Noah didn’t understand all that he was being directed to do, he *believed* God and did it, and thereby *interceded* on behalf of all of man- and animal-kind.

Daniel was a Jewish man, a man of faith, living among pagan people, the Babylonians, specifically Chaldeans – practitioners of divination. Even if Daniel didn’t understand *why* God allowed him to suffer and be made a eunuch, he continued to walk in faith, making that commitment as a *child*. Daniel rose to the top of all the wisemen in Babylon and was an *intercessor* before God on behalf of his people, who had sinned *greatly* against God, resulting in their captivity in Babylon.

Job was a man of faith living among the Edomites (sons of Esau), clear unbelievers in the God of his brother, Israel. When he was going through fiery affliction from satan himself, and had even reached his lowest point, he maintained his trust in *truth* of God and was therefore the only one able to *intercede* before God on behalf of his false comforters, to keep the judgment from coming upon them.

These three men displayed great faith in God, remaining true despite where circumstances had landed them, outside of their comfort zones; and now, compare these to those upon whom judgment is now being pronounced: Jerusalem who had corrupted themselves by their own abominations in their own home, and such will be the same in that final, end-time Gentile world power.

VV15-21

What are “noisome” beasts?

What do they do to the land?

Who are the “...three men...” mentioned in V16?

What next will God send upon the land, to depopulate it of men and beasts?

How many judgments will God send upon the land?

Which is the last judgment?

Would Noah, Daniel, or Job be able to save anyone from the judgments with their own righteousness?

LESSON: With each judgment, we understand that the sin of the people in that end-time Gentile world power will be so great that even if Noah, Daniel, and Job tried to intercede on their behalf, they would only be able to save themselves by their own righteousness.

VV22-23

What do we learn about the remnant that will emerge from all the upheaval, suffering, and judgment?

Will it only be men in the remnant?

Who will see them when they emerge?

Will Ezekiel be disappointed in the kind of people he will see?

What is God saying through His word to Ezekiel?

Does this passage of scripture confirm our notion that perhaps Ezekiel was angry with God over His judgment on Jerusalem? Eze 3:14

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What does God promise regarding the remnant that comes out of the judgment on that final end-time Gentile world power? Is this remnant the “great crowd” described in Rev 7:9-17?

LESSON: I believe this section of chapter 14 is critical – God is showing us the reason for it all; the punishment and desolation rendered upon Jerusalem, and even upon that final Gentile world power. This process through which we’re reading (and, have read) is the creation of a new and *improved* human being, the perfect human beings. The *remnant*, people elected, purified, and deemed worthy of citizenship in the kingdom, be it on earth or in heaven.

This makes me wonder if *creation* itself ever ended. We don’t hear God Himself saying “It is done!” until Rev 21:6.

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