

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Ezekiel Chapter 6 & 7

11/11/15

Ezekiel Chapter 6

Doom for the Mountains of Israel - Verses 1-10

¹ The word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, set your face against the mountains of Israel; prophesy against them ³ and say: 'You mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Sovereign LORD. This is what the Sovereign LORD says to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys: I am about to bring a sword against you, and I will destroy your high places. ⁴ Your altars will be demolished and your incense altars will be smashed; and I will slay your people in front of your idols. ⁵ I will lay the dead bodies of the Israelites in front of their idols, and I will scatter your bones around your altars. ⁶ Wherever you live, the towns will be laid waste and the high places demolished, so that your altars will be laid waste and devastated, your idols smashed and ruined, your incense altars broken down, and what you have made wiped out. ⁷ Your people will fall slain among you, and you will know that I am the LORD.

⁸ "But I will spare some, for some of you will escape the sword when you are scattered among the lands and nations. ⁹ Then in the nations where they have been carried captive, those who escape will remember me—how I have been grieved by their adulterous hearts, which have turned away from me, and by their eyes, which have lusted after their idols. They will loathe themselves for the evil they have done and for all their detestable practices. ¹⁰ And they will know that I am the LORD; I did not threaten in vain to bring this calamity on them.

6:1-14 This is the beginning of a two-part message. Remember that Ezekiel could speak only when giving messages from God. The message in chapter 6 is that Judah's idolatry will surely call down God's judgment. The message in chapter 7 describes the nature of that judgment—utter destruction of the nation. Nevertheless, God in his mercy saved a remnant. Ezekiel prophesies against the mountains of Israel because mountains were sites of the pagan shrines or "high places," where the people worshiped idols.

6:8-10 A ray of light appears in this prophecy of darkness. God would spare a small group of people, a remnant, but only after they had learned some hard lessons. God sometimes has to break a person in order to bring him or her to true repentance. The people needed new attitudes, but they wouldn't change until God broke their hearts with humiliation, pain, suffering, and defeat. Does your heart long for God enough to change those areas displeasing him? Or will God have to break your heart?

Verses 11-14

¹¹ "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Strike your hands together and stamp your feet and cry out "Alas!" because of all the wicked and detestable practices of the people of Israel, for they will fall by the sword, famine and plague. ¹² One who is far away will die of the plague, and one who is near will fall by the sword, and anyone who survives and is spared will die of famine. So will I pour out my wrath on them. ¹³ And they will know that I am the LORD, when their people lie slain among their idols around their altars, on every high hill and on all the mountaintops, under every spreading tree and every leafy oak—places where they offered fragrant incense to

all their idols. ¹⁴ And I will stretch out my hand against them and make the land a desolate waste from the desert to Diblah—wherever they live. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

6:11 Prophets often used this threefold description of judgment upon Jerusalem—sword, famine, and plague—as a way of saying that the destruction would be complete. The sword pointed to death in battle; famine came when enemies besieged a city; plague was always a danger during famine. Don't make the mistake of underestimating the extent of God's judgment. If you ignore the biblical warnings and turn away from God, his punishment awaits you.

6:14 The phrase “then they will know that I am the LORD” (or a variation of this phrase) occurs 65 times in the book of Ezekiel. The purpose of all God's punishment was not to take revenge, but to impress upon the people the truth that the Lord is the only true and living God. People in Ezekiel's day were worshipping human-made idols and calling them gods. Today money, sex, and power have become idols for many. Punishment will come upon all who put other things ahead of God. It is easy to forget that the Lord alone is God, the supreme authority and the only source of eternal love and life. Remember that God may use the difficulties of your life to teach you that he alone is God.

Ezekiel Chapter 7

The End Has Come

¹The word of the LORD came to me: ²“Son of man, this is what the Sovereign LORD says to the land of Israel: “The end! The end has come upon the four corners of the land! ³The end is now upon you, and I will unleash my anger against you. I will judge you according to your conduct and repay you for all your detestable practices. ⁴I will not look on you with pity; I will not spare you. I will surely repay you for your conduct and for the detestable practices among you. “Then you will know that I am the LORD.” ⁵“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: “Disaster! Unheard-of disaster! See, it comes! ⁶The end has come! The end has come! It has roused itself against you. See, it comes! ⁷Doom has come upon you, upon you who dwell in the land. The time has come! The day is near! There is panic, not joy, on the mountains. ⁸I am about to pour out my wrath on you and spend my anger against you. I will judge you according to your conduct and repay you for all your detestable practices. ⁹I will not look on you with pity; I will not spare you. I will repay you for your conduct and for the detestable practices among you. “Then you will know that it is I the LORD who strikes you. ¹⁰“See, the day! See, it comes! Doom has burst forth, the rod has budded, arrogance has blossomed! ¹¹Violence has arisen, a rod to punish the wicked. None of the people will be left, none of that crowd—none of their wealth, nothing of value. ¹²The time has come! The day has arrived! Let not the buyer rejoice nor the seller grieve, for my wrath is on the whole crowd. ¹³The seller will not recover the property that was sold—as long as both buyer and seller live. For the vision concerning the whole crowd will not be reversed. Because of their sins, not one of them will preserve their life.

7:10-11 In chapter 7, Ezekiel predicts the complete destruction of Judah. The wicked and proud will finally get what they deserve. If it seems as though God ignores the evil and proud people of our day, be assured that a day of judgment will come, just as it came for the people of Judah. God is waiting patiently for sinners to repent (see 2 Peter 3:9), but when his judgment comes, “none of the people will be left.” What you decide about God now will determine your fate then.

7:12-13 The nation of Judah trusted in its prosperity and possessions instead of in God. So God planned to destroy the basis of its prosperity. Whenever we begin to trust in jobs, the economy, a political system, or military might for our security, we put God in the back seat.

7:19 God's people had allowed their love of money to lead them into sin. For this, God would destroy them. Money has a strange power to lead people into sin. Paul said that "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10). It is ironic that we use a gift that comes from God—wealth—to buy things that separate us from him. It is tragic that we spend so much money seeking to satisfy ourselves, and so little time seeking God, the true source of satisfaction.

Verses 14-26

¹⁴ "They have blown the trumpet, they have made all things ready, but no one will go into battle, for my wrath is on the whole crowd. ¹⁵ Outside is the sword; inside are plague and famine. Those in the country will die by the sword; those in the city will be devoured by famine and plague. ¹⁶ The fugitives who escape will flee to the mountains. Like doves of the valleys, they will all moan, each for their own sins. ¹⁷ Every hand will go limp; every leg will be wet with urine. ¹⁸ They will put on sackcloth and be clothed with terror. Every face will be covered with shame, and every head will be shaved. ¹⁹ "They will throw their silver into the streets, and their gold will be treated as a thing unclean. Their silver and gold will not be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's wrath. It will not satisfy their hunger or fill their stomachs, for it has caused them to stumble into sin. ²⁰ They took pride in their beautiful jewelry and used it to make their detestable idols. They made it into vile images; therefore I will make it a thing unclean for them. ²¹ I will give their wealth as plunder to foreigners and as loot to the wicked of the earth, who will defile it. ²² I will turn my face away from the people, and robbers will desecrate the place I treasure. They will enter it and will defile it. ²³ "Prepare chains! For the land is full of bloodshed, and the city is full of violence. ²⁴ I will bring the most wicked of nations to take possession of their houses. I will put an end to the pride of the mighty, and their sanctuaries will be desecrated. ²⁵ When terror comes, they will seek peace in vain. ²⁶ Calamity upon calamity will come, and rumor upon rumor. They will go searching for a vision from the prophet, priestly instruction in the law will cease, the counsel of the elders will come to an end. ²⁷ The king will mourn, the prince will be clothed with despair, and the hands of the people of the land will tremble. I will deal with them according to their conduct, and by their own standards I will judge them. "Then they will know that I am the LORD."

7:20 God gave the people silver and gold, but they used that silver and gold to make idols. The resources God gives us should be used to do his work and carry out his will, but too often we use them to satisfy our own desires. When we abuse God's gifts or use resources selfishly, we miss the real purpose God had in mind. This is as shortsighted as idolatry.

7:24 The people of Jerusalem took great pride in their buildings. The temple itself was a source of pride (see 24:20-21). This pride would be crushed when the evil and godless Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem's homes and holy sanctuaries. If you are going through a humiliating experience, God may be using that experience to weed out pride in your life.