

Ezekiel

Chapters 21-22

English Standard Version:

21 The word of the Lord came to me: 2 “Son of man, set your face toward Jerusalem and preach against the sanctuaries. Prophecy against the land of Israel 3 and say to the land of Israel, Thus says the Lord: Behold, I am against you and will draw my sword from its sheath and will cut off from you both righteous and wicked. 4 Because I will cut off from you both righteous and wicked, therefore my sword shall be drawn from its sheath against all flesh from south to north. 5 And all flesh shall know that I am the Lord. I have drawn my sword from its sheath; it shall not be sheathed again.

6 “As for you, son of man, groan; with breaking heart and bitter grief, groan before their eyes. 7 And when they say to you, ‘Why do you groan?’ you shall say, ‘Because of the news that it is coming. Every heart will melt, and all hands will be feeble; every spirit will faint, and all knees will be weak as water. Behold, it is coming, and it will be fulfilled,’” declares the Lord God.

8 And the word of the Lord came to me: 9 “Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus says the Lord, say:

“A sword, a sword is sharpened

and also polished,

10 sharpened for slaughter,

polished to flash like lightning!

(Or shall we rejoice? You have despised the rod, my son, with everything of wood.) 11 So the sword is given to be polished, that it may be grasped in the hand. It is sharpened and polished to be given into the hand of the slayer. 12 Cry out and wail, son of man, for it is against my people. It is against all the princes of Israel. They are delivered over to the sword with my people. Strike therefore upon your thigh. 13 For it will not be a testing—what could it do if you despise the rod?” declares the Lord God.

14 “As for you, son of man, prophesy. Clap your hands and let the sword come down twice, yes, three times, the sword for those to be slain. It is the sword for the great slaughter, which surrounds them, 15 that their hearts may melt, and many stumble. At all their gates I have given the glittering sword. Ah, it is

made like lightning; it is taken up for slaughter. 16 Cut sharply to the right; set yourself to the left, wherever your face is directed. 17 I also will clap my hands, and I will satisfy my fury; I the Lord have spoken.”

18 The word of the Lord came to me again: 19 “As for you, son of man, mark two ways for the sword of the king of Babylon to come. Both of them shall come from the same land. And make a signpost; make it at the head of the way to a city. 20 Mark a way for the sword to come to Rabbah of the Ammonites and to Judah, into Jerusalem the fortified. 21 For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination. He shakes the arrows; he consults the teraphim; he looks at the liver. 22 Into his right hand comes the divination for Jerusalem, to set battering rams, to open the mouth with murder, to lift up the voice with shouting, to set battering rams against the gates, to cast up mounds, to build siege towers. 23 But to them it will seem like a false divination. They have sworn solemn oaths, but he brings their guilt to remembrance, that they may be taken.

24 “Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you have made your guilt to be remembered, in that your transgressions are uncovered, so that in all your deeds your sins appear—because you have come to remembrance, you shall be taken in hand. 25 And you, O profane wicked one, prince of Israel, whose day has come, the time of your final punishment, 26 thus says the Lord God: Remove the turban and take off the crown. Things shall not remain as they are. Exalt that which is low, and bring low that which is exalted. 27 A ruin, ruin, ruin I will make it. This also shall not be, until he comes, the one to whom judgment belongs, and I will give it to him.

28 “And you, son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus says the Lord God concerning the Ammonites and concerning their reproach; say, A sword, a sword is drawn for the slaughter. It is polished to consume and to flash like lightning— 29 while they see for you false visions, while they divine lies for you—to place you on the necks of the profane wicked, whose day has come, the time of their final punishment. 30 Return it to its sheath. In the place where you were created, in the land of your origin, I will judge you. 31 And I will pour out my indignation upon you; I will blow upon you with the fire of my wrath, and I will deliver you into the hands of brutish men, skillful to destroy. 32 You shall be fuel for the fire. Your blood shall be in the midst of the land. You shall be no more remembered, for I the Lord have spoken.”

Israel's Shedding of Blood

22 And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 “And you, son of man, will you judge, will you judge the bloody city? Then declare to her all her abominations. 3 You shall say, Thus says the Lord God: A city that sheds blood in her midst, so that her time may come, and that makes idols to defile herself! 4 You have become guilty by the blood that you have shed, and defiled by the idols that you have made, and you have brought your days near, the appointed time of your years has come. Therefore I have made you a reproach to the nations, and a mockery to all the countries. 5 Those who are near and those who are far from you will mock you; your name is defiled; you are full of tumult.

6 “Behold, the princes of Israel in you, every one according to his power, have been bent on shedding blood. 7 Father and mother are treated with contempt in you; the sojourner suffers extortion in your midst; the fatherless and the widow are wronged in you. 8 You have despised my holy things and profaned my Sabbaths. 9 There are men in you who slander to shed blood, and people in you who eat on the mountains; they commit lewdness in your midst. 10 In you men uncover their fathers' nakedness; in you they violate women who are unclean in their menstrual impurity. 11 One commits abomination with his neighbor's wife; another lewdly defiles his daughter-in-law; another in you violates his sister, his father's daughter. 12 In you they take bribes to shed blood; you take interest and profit and make gain of your neighbors by extortion; but me you have forgotten, declares the Lord God.

13 “Behold, I strike my hand at the dishonest gain that you have made, and at the blood that has been in your midst. 14 Can your courage endure, or can your hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with you? I the Lord have spoken, and I will do it. 15 I will scatter you among the nations and disperse you through the countries, and I will consume your uncleanness out of you. 16 And you shall be profaned by your own doing in the sight of the nations, and you shall know that I am the Lord.”

17 And the word of the Lord came to me: 18 “Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to me; all of them are bronze and tin and iron and lead in the furnace; they are dross of silver. 19 Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you have all become dross, therefore, behold, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. 20 As one gathers silver and bronze and iron and lead and tin into a furnace, to blow the fire on it in order to melt it, so I will gather you in my anger and in my wrath, and I will put you in and melt you. 21 I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of my wrath, and you shall be melted in the midst of it. 22 As silver is melted in a furnace, so you shall be melted in

the midst of it, and you shall know that I am the Lord; I have poured out my wrath upon you.”

23 And the word of the Lord came to me: 24 “Son of man, say to her, You are a land that is not cleansed or rained upon in the day of indignation. 25 The conspiracy of her prophets in her midst is like a roaring lion tearing the prey; they have devoured human lives; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in her midst. 26 Her priests have done violence to my law and have profaned my holy things. They have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and they have disregarded my Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them. 27 Her princes in her midst are like wolves tearing the prey, shedding blood, destroying lives to get dishonest gain. 28 And her prophets have smeared whitewash for them, seeing false visions and divining lies for them, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord God,’ when the Lord has not spoken. 29 The people of the land have practiced extortion and committed robbery. They have oppressed the poor and needy, and have extorted from the sojourner without justice. 30 And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none. 31 Therefore I have poured out my indignation upon them. I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath. I have returned their way upon their heads, declares the Lord God.”

Ezekiel 21-22: NKJV with Notes

21 And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 “Son of man, set your face toward Jerusalem, ***preach against the holy places***, and ***prophecy against the land of Israel***;

- Ezekiel turns his prophetic utterances toward the “holy places” in Jerusalem. This refers to the outer court, the inner court, and Holy of Holies – all three considered holy places of the temple of Jerusalem. – The Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, footnotes pg. 1262

3 and say to the land of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I am against you, and I will draw My sword out of its sheath and cut off both righteous and wicked from you. 4 Because I will cut off both righteous and wicked from you, therefore My sword shall go out of its sheath against all flesh from south to north, 5 that all flesh may know that I, the Lord, have drawn My sword out of its sheath; it shall not return anymore.” ’

- Among the Old Testament prophets, God's "sword" is often a metaphor for an invasion or war coming against Israel, Judea, or Jerusalem. (see Isa. 34:6, Jere 12:12, 47:6) In the contest of certain New Testament Scriptures, the "sword" is a metaphor for the written Word of God (Eph 6:17, Heb 4:12) and for the spoken word that proceeds from the mouth of Christ, which will destroy the future armies of the Antichrist at the battle of Armageddon. – The Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, footnotes pg. 1262

6 Sigh therefore, son of man, with a breaking heart, and sigh with bitterness before their eyes. 7 And it shall be when they say to you, 'Why are you sighing?' that you shall answer, 'Because of the news; when it comes, every heart will melt, all hands will be feeble, every spirit will faint, and all knees will be weak as water. Behold, it is coming and shall be brought to pass,' says the Lord God."

- Melting hearts, feeble hands, faint spirits, and weak knees are physical indications that the people are so overwhelmed with fear that their bodies are reacting to it, causing all strength to depart from them. Ezekiel said that "terrors" would be upon the people. Imagine knowing you and your entire family may be slain, taken as slaves, or die in a famine that is coming – and that you cannot escape these terrible things. – The Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, footnotes pg. 1262

8 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 9 "Son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the Lord!' Say:

'A sword, a sword is sharpened

And also polished!

10 Sharpened to make a dreadful slaughter,

Polished to flash like lightning!

Should we then make mirth?

It despises **the scepter of My son,**

As it does all wood.

11 And He has given it to be polished,

That it may be handled;

This sword is sharpened, and it is polished

To be given into the hand of the slayer.'

- The phrase "rod(scepter) of my son" refers to Israel and Judah. In Exodus 4:22-23, God calls Israel "My son, even my firstborn," and commands Pharaoh, "Let my son go, that he may serve me..." the "rod" refers to the scepter of rulership that Jacob promised to the tribe of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar had already "cut down" the trees of Assyria and Egypt when he invaded them. This, the "tree" of Israel would not be spared. A sword is "sharpened" prior to battle, as indicated in verse 11. – The Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, footnotes pg. 1262

12 "Cry and wail, son of man;
For it will be against My people,
Against all the princes of Israel.
Terrors including the sword will be against My people;
Therefore strike your thigh.

13 "Because it is a testing,
And what if the sword despises even the scepter?
The scepter shall be no more,"
says the Lord God.

14 "You therefore, son of man, prophesy,
And strike your hands together.

The third time let the sword do double damage.

It is the sword that slays,
The sword that slays the great men,
That enters their private chambers.

- The sword "doubled the third time" refers to three kings: Jehoiakim, Jeconiah (Jehoiachin), and Zedekiah. – The Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, footnotes pg. 1262-1263

15 I have set the point of the sword against all their gates,
That the heart may melt and many may stumble.

Ah! It is made bright;
It is grasped for slaughter:

16 “Swords at the ready!
Thrust right!
Set your blade!
Thrust left—
Wherever your edge is ordered!

17 “I also will beat My fists together,
And I will cause My fury to rest;
I, the Lord, have spoken.”

18 The word of the Lord came to me again, saying: 19 “And son of man, appoint for yourself two ways for the sword of the king of Babylon to go; both of them shall go from the same land. Make a sign; put it at the head of the road to the city. 20 Appoint a road for the sword to go to Rabbah of the Ammonites, and to Judah, into fortified Jerusalem. 21 For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the images, he looks at the liver. 22 In his right hand is the divination for Jerusalem: to set up battering rams, to call for a slaughter, to lift the voice with shouting, to set battering rams against the gates, to heap up a siege mound, and to build a wall. 23 And it will be to them like a false divination in the eyes of those who have sworn oaths with them; **but he will bring their iniquity to remembrance**, that they may be taken.

- Nebuchadnezzar had two options : He could capture the major city of the Ammonites (Rabbath), or he could march his armies into Jerusalem. The invading king sought divination by “shaking” arrows. The places of possible invasion were written on the wooden stem of each arrow; then the arrows were placed in a quiver and shaken. Then, one was pulled out. The name on the first arrow removed from the quiver was the name of the first place to be invaded. Nebuchadnezzar pulled the arrow for Jerusalem with his right hand (v. 22). Nebuchadnezzar also consulted with images that were household gods that he carried, and he “looked in the liver’ hoping to find a clue of the future in the pattern of the blood vessels (v. 21). These were all ancient pagan

methods of attempting to discover the future, especially prior to a major war.
– The Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, footnotes pg. 1263

24 “Therefore thus says the Lord God: ‘Because you have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your transgressions are uncovered, so that in all your doings your sins appear—because you have come to remembrance, you shall be taken in hand.

25 ‘Now to you, O profane, **wicked prince of Israel**, whose day has come, whose iniquity shall end, 26 thus says the Lord God:

“Remove the turban, and take off the crown;

Nothing shall remain the same.

Exalt the humble, and humble the exalted.

- King Zedekiah made an oath to submit to Nebuchadnezzar. However, he would break the oath and resist. Here Zedekiah is called the “profane wicked prince of Israel”. The diadem (*mitsnepet*) is the *mitre* (gold crown) of the high priest, and the crown is the crown of Zedekiah, who was taken captive. When he was captured, his crown was given to Gedaliah, the Nebuchadnezzar appointed as governor (Jer 40:5). When iniquity reaches a peak and the cup is full, then judgment will come. – The Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, footnotes pg. 1263

27 Overthrown, overthrown,

I will make it overthrown!

It shall be no longer,

Until He comes whose right it is,

And I will give it to Him.” ’

- The word overturn is mentioned three times, possibly referring to the three kings who were taken captive...The crown would be removed from Judah until the one comes “whose right it is” to wear it. This is similar to Jacob’s statement about Judah: “The scepter shall not depart from Judah...until Shiloh come” (Gen 49:10). Christ was from Judah and is called the “Lion of the tribe of Judah,” (Rev 5:5) and will return to Jerusalem as King of kings with “many crowns” (see Rev. 19L12,16) – The Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, footnotes pg. 1264

A Sword Against the Ammonites

28 “And you, son of man, prophesy and say, ‘Thus says the Lord God concerning the Ammonites and concerning their reproach,’ and say:

‘A sword, a sword is drawn,

Polished for slaughter,

For consuming, for flashing—

29 While they see false visions for you,

While they divine a lie to you,

To bring you on the necks of the wicked, the slain

Whose day has come,

Whose iniquity shall end.

30 ‘Return it to its sheath.

I will judge you

In the place where you were created,

In the land of your nativity.

31 I will pour out My indignation on you;

I will blow against you with the fire of My wrath,

And deliver you into the hands of brutal men who are skillful to destroy.

32 You shall be fuel for the fire;

Your blood shall be in the midst of the land.

You shall not be remembered,

For I the Lord have spoken.’ ”

- When the Ammonites heard Nebuchadnezzar had taken the other part to Jerusalem, they felt more secure because they had avoided destruction. Ezekiel warns that the false diviners promising protection will fail, and God has already announced a sword of destruction against them. The phrase “to bring thee upon the necks of them that are slain” indicates that their destruction would follow Judah’s destruction. The Ammonites would not be carried into captivity, but they would die in the land of their nativity. Israel will be

eventually restored; the Ammonites will not even be remembered. – The Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, footnotes pg. 1264

Sins of Jerusalem

22 Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 “Now, son of man, will you judge, will you judge the bloody city? Yes, show her all her abominations! 3 Then say, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “The city sheds blood in her own midst, that her time may come; and she makes idols within herself to defile herself. 4 You have become guilty by the blood which you have shed, and have defiled yourself with the idols which you have made. You have caused your days to draw near, and have come to the end of your years; therefore I have made you a reproach to the nations, and a mockery to all countries. 5 Those near and those far from you will mock you as infamous and full of tumult.

6 “Look, the princes of Israel: each one has used his power to shed blood in you. 7 In you they have made light of father and mother; in your midst they have oppressed the stranger; in you they have mistreated the fatherless and the widow. 8 You have despised My holy things and profaned My Sabbaths. 9 In you are men who slander to cause bloodshed; in you are those who eat on the mountains; in your midst they commit lewdness.

- Notice that the sin of shedding of blood is mentioned in four of nine verses...
– The Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, footnotes pg. 1264

10 In you men uncover their fathers’ nakedness; in you they violate women who are set apart during their impurity. 11 One commits abomination with his neighbor’s wife; another lewdly defiles his daughter-in-law; and another in you violates his sister, his father’s daughter. 12 In you they take bribes to shed blood; you take usury and increase; you have made profit from your neighbors by extortion, and have forgotten Me,” says the Lord God.

13 “Behold, therefore, I beat My fists at the dishonest profit which you have made, and at the bloodshed which has been in your midst. **14 Can your heart endure, or can your hands remain strong, in the days when I shall deal with you? I, the Lord, have spoken, and will do it.** 15 I will scatter you among the nations, disperse you throughout the countries, and remove your filthiness completely from you. 16 You shall defile yourself in the sight of the nations; then you shall know that I am the Lord.” ’ ”

- The people of Israel broke many of the moral laws found in the Law given on Mount Sinai. They committed incest, including relationships with those who

were categorized as unclean by the law. They committed adultery with other men's wives, and the men committed sexual sins with their daughters-in-law and their sisters. At this point, Israel was no different than the surrounding pagan tribes and God was announcing to them why judgment was swift. – The Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, footnotes pg. 1264

Israel in the Furnace

17 The word of the Lord came to me, saying, 18 “Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to Me; they are all bronze, tin, iron, and lead, in the midst of a furnace; they have become dross from silver. 19 Therefore thus says the Lord God: ‘Because you have all become dross, therefore behold, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. 20 As men gather silver, bronze, iron, lead, and tin into the midst of a furnace, to blow fire on it, to melt it; so I will gather you in My anger and in My fury, and I will leave you there and melt you. 21 Yes, I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and you shall be melted in its midst. 22 As silver is melted in the midst of a furnace, so shall you be melted in its midst; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have poured out My fury on you.’ ”

- Israel's sins are compared to dross that causes impurities in precious metals. The only way of purifying gold or silver, bringing its value back, is purification in fire. God said the only way Israel will return to Him is through the fires of the Chaldean invasion, causing the people to eventually repent and return to His laws. God's trials of fire are never intended to destroy a person; they are only designed to refine a person's faith and remove spiritual hindrances (1 Peter 1:7) – The Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, footnotes pg. 1265

Israel's Wicked Leaders

23 And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 24 “Son of man, say to her: ‘You are a land that is not cleansed or rained on in the day of indignation.’ 25 The conspiracy of **her prophets** in her midst is like a roaring lion tearing the prey; they have devoured people; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in her midst.

- The prophets had conspired and joined together to personally profit from the people; as a result of their sins, the Chaldean invasion made many of the wives widows, of their husbands were slain in battle. – The Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, footnotes pg. 1265

26 **Her priests** have violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them.

- The second leadership group whom Ezekiel rebukes are the priests, who were no longer following the divine order established in the Law of Moses. The law separated the clean from the unclean, in the realm of moral actions, civil responsibilities, and social requirements in the community. The priests were no longer separating the clean from the unclean, thus profaning or mocking God's judgments and statutes. When the shepherds sin; the sheep will follow, meaning that when ministers become corrupt, the people will follow. – The Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, footnotes pg. 1266

27 **Her princes** in her midst are like wolves tearing the prey, to shed blood, to destroy people, and to get dishonest gain.

- First it was the prophets, then the priests, then the princes. Princes who profited personally through dishonest gain, or used their influence for personal financial increase, were oppressing the people. – The Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, footnotes pg. 1266

28 Her prophets plastered them with untempered mortar, seeing false visions, and divining lies for them, saying, 'Thus says the Lord God,' when the Lord had not spoken. 29 **The people** of the land have used oppressions, committed robbery, and mistreated the poor and needy; and they wrongfully oppress the stranger.

- After dealing with the leaders, God now rebukes His people living in the land. The corruption of the leadership had flowed from the highest office down to the common Israelite. The communities of Israel were now participating in the same form of oppression and abuse among themselves as their leaders had demonstrated. They too were abusing the poor and the stranger living in the land. God instructed Israel to treat strangers with honesty and respect, as Israel was once a sojourner living in the land of Egypt. Israel had long forgotten what it was like to be a stranger in foreign land; thus, they mistreated the stranger breaking another of God's social-civil instructions. – The Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, footnotes pg. 1266

30 So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. 31 Therefore I have poured out My indignation

on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads,” says the Lord God.

- Under the Old Covenant, the Almighty would alter His decisions of judgment when one godly person walking in a covenant relationship would “stand in the gap” and make intercession for the people. Abraham was the “gap filler” when he asked the Lord to spare Sodom if He could find then righteous people (see Gen 18:32). The Lord only found four, but faithfully delivered Lot, Abraham’s nephew, prior to Sodom’s destruction.

In the wilderness, Israel molded golden calf, dancing and praying to the idol, and arousing God’s anger. He informed Moses that He was destroying the entire nation and that Moses would be the father of a new nation. Moses interceded and “God repented” of the evil he was planning against Israel. Aaron the high priest also became a “gap filler” when he took the censers of incense and fire and stood between the living and the dead; as the smoke ascended to God, the wrath of God was appeased, and the death plague ceased among the people.

God told Ezekiel He had been searching the land for someone to “stand in the gap”. The gap here is the spiritual break that the people’s sin created, thus tearing down the protective hedge (wall) around the city and the people.

One person willing to stand in the gap can change the outcome of a nation. For example, despite Jonah’s resistance to warn Nineveh, when he finally did issue his warning, Nineveh repented and was spared for many years. When the Assyrian army surrounded Jerusalem with 185,000 men, King Hezekiah called upon God and the Lord sent a death angel who destroyed the entire army overnight. Believers should never underestimate the power of our personal intercession and should always remember that crying out to God can alter the future of a nation or a local church, or bring deliverance to a family member. – The Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, footnotes pg. 1265