

<Their Idols in Their Heart>

Ezekiel 14:1 – 16:14

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~ Our Spiritual Safari is traveling a very hard road in this passage of the Word of God with the prophet Ezekiel. Because this stretch of the Scriptural highway is so difficult, most people take the nearest exit and stick to traveling the back streets of the Bible from here. Well, these messages are so current that they are something we could each write in our own journal's. But, tragically, most of the Christians I know only want to ignore truth. See, Ezekiel is giving us the unadulterated answers to what we are to do when we find ourselves far away from God. This prophet is telling us what we *MUST* do when we discover we are living in disobedience to the Word of God.

Many people live very far out of the Lord's direct will for their lives, typically in abject disobedience; and, many times, no one knows about it except for them – and the Lord. Well, friends, God would rather see you rowing your boat in a hurricane, with hundred foot waves crashing over you as you fight for your life, as opposed to seeing you live in disobedience to Him. God would rather lay any one of us out flat on our back on a hospital bed – or in a jail cell - alone – rather than allow us to live in open rebellion to Him. God will not hesitate to send us deep depression, sicknesses, permeating financial problems, and loneliness to languish in if that's the way we will hear His message and turn back to Him. Don't kid yourself. Those who tell you otherwise are false prophets sent by Satan himself to give you a false hope....

XIV

1 Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me.

2 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

3 Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?

4 Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;

~ Ezekiel has been very careful to give the Word of the Lord exactly as it was given to him by the Lord. His message is exactly one hundred eighty degrees from the false prophets in his day. God is having Ezekiel tell the captive children of Israel in Babylon why He judged the nation the way He did. Here, in this chapter, we have a prophecy against the idolatry of the elders. Ezekiel is calling the elders to repent. Repentance is God's message to those who profess to be His people in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Jesus told the *religious rulers* to repent. Jesus told the *churches* in Revelation to repent. What Jesus never did was tell any unsaved and lost sinners to repent! Well, the principles that God writes down in His Word are still in operation today; you can write that all down, too.

The elders were, obviously, deeply disturbed at what Ezekiel had been doing in acting out the parables, and with the messages he was giving the people. So, they thought they would come talk to him. They are extremely pious pygmies as they pretend they want to help Ezekiel; but they're phonies. They are, actually, trying to trick Ezekiel as they act like they are listening to him. They were saying, "... oh, brother Ezekiel, we don't worship idols. Whatever gave you that idea?" Well, it was God who gave Ezekiel the discernment to know that Israel was worshiping idols. They likely didn't have physical idols, per se, in their homes or anything like that. No, their idolatry was even worse. They had idolatry *in their hearts!*

You will find idolatry today in the hearts of myriad multitudes of church members, friends. We have all manner of people pretending to be God's people and, frankly, they don't even know they are spiritually as dead as a

pterodactyl. They toy with sin; play with it – even while “*servicing*” in the church in every capacity you can imagine – and they honestly and sincerely think they are getting away with it. They put up a great front, and practice every form of ritual and religion. Then, one day – usually in the middle of the night – catastrophe strikes, and the ship of their faith hits the rocks – their life disintegrates in a sudden flash of lightening. You’re not going to get away with sin. Period. Full stop. God still judges sin in nations, organizations – and in the lives of individuals.

Those types of people do not want to hear this message from this book of the Bible. This where many begin to pick-and-choose what they will and will not accept in Scripture. As a result, this part of the Bible is sorely neglected. In fact, this is a complete black-hole in most people’s understanding. If you give this message, people close their eyes and place their hands over their ears like a second-grade child would do. Then, they’ll put a knife in your back when you turn around. God judges according to the multitude of idols we hold in our hearts. Do you love your job more than the Lord? Do you love your car more than God? Do you love your home more than God? Do you love your clothes more than God? Do you love your family more than God? Do you love your friends more than God? Do you love that secret sin that no one knows about except God more than God? It’s very, very, *VERY* easy to bring severe judgment upon ourselves in almost every area of our lives, my beloved.

Look, I’ll be the first one to admit, this is frightful, awful stuff to look upon; because it convicts me just as much as it does you. It is so amazingly easy to become an abject hypocrite – especially if we deign teach the Bible, or desire to be some sort of spiritual leader. There are myriad people running churches who outwardly condemn the sins they secretly wish they could taste the fruits of! That’s idolatry in their hearts. This old sinful nature we have is bad – very bad; and we never get away from it in this life. We can so quickly become a Christian Tragedy that it’s almost effortless; and God judges the phony religious man faster, and more severely, than He does *ANYONE* else. Stop playing with this stuff. Ezekiel is laying it on the line with the religious rulers. He is calling them out as frauds to their faces and he makes no apologies for doing so....

5 That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.

6 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.

7 For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me; I the LORD will answer him by myself:

8 And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

9 And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the LORD have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.

10 And they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity: the punishment of the prophet shall be even as the punishment of him that seeketh unto him;

11 That the house of Israel may go no more astray from me, neither be polluted any more with all their transgressions; but that they may be my people, and I may be their God, saith the Lord GOD.

12 The word of the LORD came again to me, saying,

13 Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it:

14 Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD.

~ So, the false prophets are still telling the captives that God will spare Jerusalem, that they would be going home soon, that everything was fine between Israel and Babylon, and that God would never destroy Solomon's Temple, or decimate the entire land of Israel. Well, most of that had already happened. The false prophets were still telling them that they are His chosen people – which was true; and that God loved Jerusalem because it was His city; which was also true. God had called Israel the Apple of His Eye – which was also true. In fact, the false prophet could quote such an abundance of Scriptural truth that it was almost impossible not to believe them; and they do the same thing today.

The problem is: putting the entire Word of prophecy together is like a jigsaw puzzle: if you are missing just *ONE* little piece out of a five thousand piece puzzle, then you do not have a complete picture. Well, these false prophets were missing some critical pieces out of the prophetic puzzle of truth and wisdom; and they were ignoring it as if it didn't even matter. Candidly, most, if not all, of the theology I hear taught today cannot be sustained throughout the entirety of Scripture. Some is very close; but they still have a few missing pieces. In the large majority of Bible teaching, there are so many pieces missing that it's impossible to tell what the picture should even be.

Ezekiel has made it abundantly clear that the nation Israel was under the severe judgment of God, that Isaiah and Jeremiah had been absolutely correct in their prophecies and that, not only were they not going back to Jerusalem, but there was nothing to go back to anymore. Their continuous rebellion was no longer going to be tolerated by God. He had given them opportunity after opportunity – prophet after prophet – to turn back to Him, but they refused. Naturally, they rejected that message. This remarkable passage makes all of these truths so vivid that it is literally impossible to miss the message. All one can do with this section of Scripture if they don't like it is ignore it altogether. Even if Noah or Job or Daniel had been in Jerusalem, none of them could have delivered Israel from judgment. The world didn't even listen to Noah in Noah's day; and

neither would the children of Israel. Job's three so-called friends were miserable comforters. That should have rang in their ears like a five-alarm fire-bell; but they still wouldn't listen.

I find it absolutely amusing to hear people talk about finding Noah's Ark, and finding evidence of Jesus' resurrection, and all that stuff. Maybe they did find it – but – that will cause exactly *no one* to turn to the Lord God. Remember, the rich man in hell said, “....I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead” — Luke chapter sixteen. Let's stop playing religion and get real for a change, shall we? ~

15 If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the beasts:

16 Though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate.

17 Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off man and beast from it:

18 Though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they only shall be delivered themselves.

19 Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast:

20 Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.

~ God pays a deeply respectful tribute to Noah, Job and Daniel in this chapter. However, at this time in which we are studying, Noah wouldn't have even been able to save his own family; as he had done at the time of the flood! Ezekiel was the prophet down by the river with the captives; but up there in the palace of Babylon was Daniel. These captives knew all about Daniel, too. They knew Daniel was God's man. However, the reason God took Daniel out of Israel, and out from amongst the captives, is because they wouldn't have listened to him, either – but that old pagan and heathen king, Nebuchadnezzar, *WOULD* hear Daniel; and, of course, Nebuchadnezzar was the sword that went through the land and poured out God's fury on Israel. That's why Daniel ultimately became the Prime Minister in Babylon. These are remarkable Scriptural truths.

There are so few churches in this world today in which the people will actually tolerate the proper, correct and complete teaching of the Word of God that, if you knew how few, it would scare the living daylights out of you. Honestly, because I always am honest with you dear readers, that is the reason God has sent me to this forum on which I teach, as opposed to sending me to a church to teach the Bible. If I stood up and gave this message to a congregation, we wouldn't have a congregation. They definitely wouldn't have me. When self-professing believers in churches won't listen to the Word of God, He will send His message to a people that everyone else has written off — the remnant in captivity. That's what's real, friends; irrespective of whether you believe it, accept it, understand it, agree with it, like it – or not. Now, let's move on....

21 For thus saith the Lord GOD; How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast?

22 Yet, behold, therein shall be left a remnant that shall be brought forth, both sons and daughters: behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way and their doings: and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, even concerning all that I have brought upon it.

23 And they shall comfort you, when ye see their ways and their doings: and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord GOD.

XV

1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest?

3 Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon?

4 Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for any work?

5 Behold, when it was whole, it was meet for no work: how much less shall it be meet yet for any work, when the fire hath devoured it, and it is burned?

6 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; As the vine tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

7 And I will set my face against them; they shall go out from one fire, and another fire shall devour them; and ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I set my face against them.

8 And I will make the land desolate, because they have committed a trespass, saith the Lord GOD.

~ This chapter is another remarkable chapter of the Bible. We saw the vine as a figure of the nation Israel in the Book of Isaiah chapter five; so, we're not guessing at the meaning of the vine. The purpose of a vine is to bear fruit – it is good for nothing else. The parable of the vine that wouldn't bear fruit is given by the Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel of John chapter fifteen.

However, Jesus said Israel is no longer the vine. Jesus said He is the Genuine Vine. The vine that won't bear fruit for Christ is cast into the fire – and it fuels the fire – and fire always speaks of judgment! It is critical to rightly divide the truth that Jesus wasn't speaking of salvation in that parable. No, it speaks of rewards. Remember, Paul said, “... *if any man's work be burned he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.*” Many great men have been removed from the place of fruit-bearing. God does that in many different ways, too. So, one might be removed from God's service – but they won't lose their salvation. These children of Israel, at the time in which we are studying, weren't bearing fruit; so, they were set aside. God wants fruit from us, friends. Some forty-fold, some sixty, some one hundred-fold. Turn all of that over in your mind a few times and see what you come up with....

XVI

1 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations,

3 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite.

~ So, we end this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God in another absolutely remarkable chapter. Ezekiel just isn't going to let us forget that he is getting us the Word of the Lord. You may not accept that this is the Word of God, but Ezekiel would have you know he is giving you the Word of the Lord. Well, we have another parable about a little illegitimate baby that was abandoned and orphaned and left for dead. That little orphan is Jerusalem. This does *NOT* speak of the origin of the nation Israel; and it is not speaking of Abraham and Sarah, either. Remember, the city of Jerusalem was called *Salem* in Abrahams' day – and it was already in existence. Historically, it was an Amorite city at that time of Genesis chapter fifteen verse sixteen. It was also a Hittite city, and the Hittite's were a great and thriving nation at one time. The Hittite's actually controlled the

entire land we know today as Israel. So, the city of Jerusalem is nothing for Israel to brag about, in and of itself.

God adopted Jerusalem when they were polluted in their own blood. He cleaned them up, gave them clothes and food - and He kept them from dying. That's what God did for you and me, too, friends. You and I have a horrible, disgusting background. We are simply terrible people. Adam and Eve became sinners. We were all born in iniquity. David said, "... *in sin did my mother conceive me.*" We have nothing whatsoever to boast about. Even if your ancestors came over to America on the Mayflower, they were just a bunch of sinners saved by the grace of God; looking for something better than a dictatorship. We were literally dead in trespasses and sins when God saved us. That's when God said, "live!" Jesus says, "*unless you be born again you shall not see the Kingdom of God.*" If you trust Christ, He will save you. He who has the Son has life, but the wrath of God abideth continually on he who has not the Son. God have mercy on the Christian that refuses to learn these truths. So many people sell out very cheap to the world. Satan buys people like bananas – by the bunch. Let's be true to God today, shall we? That's what the apostle John said. That's what Ezekiel is saying. That's what Andrew C. Hunt is saying....

4 And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all.

5 None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born.

6 And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.

7 I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou wast naked and bare.

8 Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.

9 Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil.

10 I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk.

11 I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck.

12 And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head.

13 Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and broidered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom.

14 And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD ~

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