

Ezekiel Chapters 25-27 - John Karmelich

Title: Lord, what about this man? John 21:20!

If you're familiar with the Gospel accounts, at the end of the Gospel of John, Jesus tells Peter how he is going to die (unpleasantly) when he is older! Peter then looks at the disciple John, (obviously standing there) and asks, "What about this man?" The point of John 21:20-24 is that God is in control of life and it's not our job to worry about the fate of others, unless God chooses to reveal that to us. If you've been studying Ezekiel to date, one can easily be thinking, "Wait a minute, I get why God wants to punish all of us for failing to be a witness for Him, but what about nonbelievers?" They don't believe in God! Do we need to be concerned about them? Yes, God wants us to grasp the eternal fate of non-believers and as an illustration, why judgment on the neighbors' surrounding Israel is necessary. We realize judgment is individual, but there is also judgment on nations! A lot of that is based on how the treat the nation of Israel. To share an old saying, the biggest mistake Jewish people make is, they fail to see Jesus is their Messiah! The biggest mistake Christians make is failure to see we worship a Jewish God! My point is God called Israel to be a good witness to those around them! Those nations turned against Israel during a time of crisis and God, as the God of the Jewish people had to demonstrate who He is!

In these chapters God focuses on some of the nations surrounding Israel especially the ones who turned their backs in Israel in their time of need. Then the text spends a lot of time describing the fall of Tyre, a wealthy city nearby! The reason for the long dirge against them is one can easily think having lots of money and power can protect one from wrath! Ezekiel describes their fall despite them having all that! I'm not saying providing for oneself or even becoming wealthy is bad! Just saying that's not an excuse to ignore God just because one has those things! With that said, the issue for us isn't ancient history as much as the danger of turning not only from God, but not supporting those He's called! (I.e., the nation of Israel!) Not saying all Jewish people living in Israel are perfect. The simple point is God gave them that land and we must honor what God calls us to honor. OK then, let's begin discussing nations around Israel and how that affects our lives today!

The first thing to remember is the modern nation of Jordan is comprised of three separate nations at the time of Ezekiel. Chapter 26 focuses on those three nations. It also discusses the Philistines, a nation of foreigners who lived in Israel for centuries up to the time of Ezekiel. All of those people get wiped out through the spread and conquering of the Babylonians. The reason they get judged is none of them did anything to help Israel in their hour of need. Yes, God's judging Israel, but at the same time all nations must realize He's God, so judgment is necessary! Which reminds me, since most people can download a Bible on our phone for free there's practically no excuse for not only honoring Jesus as God! For all of us who made that commitment, we're called to honor the Jewish nation as God's chosen, whether we want to accept it or not!

Then we'll get three chapters just on the nation of Tyre. Chapter 28 is part of it, and I'm going to spend the entire next lesson just on "28". The reason I'd argue Ezekiel has so much text dedicated to the death of the nation of Tyre, is partially to show that God knows all things about the future! It's also the issue that many people struggle with, having wealth and trusting in their wealth over God! Centuries earlier, the king of Tyre was friends with King David and his son Solomon. In the centuries since, Tyre did not treat Israel kindly, because they got wealthy through trade and the main trade route from Tyre to Africa required travel along the "king's highway" (located on Israel's border!) Tyre resented paying "transport fees" to Israel. Tyre was also guilty of taking Israelites as slaves at that time. The point being that God held Tyre accountable for how they're treating His chosen and so, "It is judgement time!" The point for

us is not to be an expert on ancient history. It's to understand that God cares about how others treat His people and the fact we're all accountable to God based on what we know about His existence!

OK then, we all get the "gist" by now. Let me share a few details: One of the three nations (located in what we call Jordan today) was called Ammon. Before Jerusalem was invaded, they made a treaty with Israel to protect each other. They were happy when the Babylonians chose to attack Jerusalem. What's the issue as far as God is concerned is they didn't keep their word to stand by His people. Yes, God did want Israel to be judged, but the issue again is about being a witness for His people. The next nation is called Moab. Bottom line they refused to help Israel and God's making it known He's the God over all gods and He's not to be messed with! The third nation there is called Edom. Let's just say Babylonians destroyed them "while they're in the neighborhood!"

Chapter 25 chapter ends with a few verses about the destruction of the Philistines. Some argue that was a past tense event when Ezekiel wrote this. To me, it's a non-issue as Ezekiel is describing why nations in the area are being judged. Bottom line, this nation which has been a thorn in Israel's side back before David was king, no longer existed after that. For those who don't know the word "Palestine" was taken from the word Philistine and the Romans renamed Israel "Palestine" as an insult to the Jewish people!

OK, onto Tyre: Chapter 26 in a nutshell explains their judgement. Chapter 27 is a dirge that describes why it was necessary for that nation to be judged at that time. In short, they didn't treat Israel well for a lot of centuries and again God isn't to be messed with! As the old saying goes, "the wheels of the gods grind slowly but thoroughly"! That definitely fits here. Tyre was a city and part of the Phoenicians as a group that included the ancient city of Sidon nearby. Tyre got rich by trading with entities all around the Mediterranean. Phoenicians were known as the first nation to use the "western alphabet". The key point is they weren't kind to Israel, so judgment came down on them! Why now? At that time Israel is being destroyed as an entity and Tyre never used any of their influence to help them! God wanted Tyre to realize He's the God of the Israelites even when they turn from Him!

What's fascinating about Chapter 26 is Verse 12 switches from singular to plural! That's because when the Babylonians came there, they failed to wipe out Tyre as they had a great navy. To prevent their end they took much of their possessions and moved to an island off their coast! Centuries later, Alexander the Great destroyed that island city, by building a bridge to that island using the ruins the Babylon left! That's pretty much how Chapter 27 describes it! So if you think Ezekiel got his information after all of that happened, remember he definitely lived long before Alexander! History records that Alexander the Great spared Jerusalem as he was shown Daniel's writings that showed that he was going to conquer all the Middle East as well as other places!

Chapter 27 as mentioned is a dirge! In the original Hebrew the words are in "meters" and have a dirge type of quality. In fact, the tone is very "naval" to reflect their sea going nature! This chapter lists lots of nations in and around the region from (possibly) England to Middle East Arab countries. The point is they were a wealthy nation from trade both over land and by sea! To me there is nothing wrong with earning money to gain wealth (legally of course). The issue is to trust in IT and ignore God. Tyre was well aware of the God of Israel both by their history and their trade! As I mentioned, God judged them for how badly they treated Israel. Since Babylon (based out of Iraq today) was on the warpath, God did use them to judge nations around them. Obviously, Babylon wanted the wealth of Tyre. While they did not fully destroy them, Babylon did lots of damage and got a lot of wealth! As the old saying goes, the purpose of armies is to break things and kill people! Let's just say that's what happened!

Obviously, the lesson isn't to be an expert in Middle East History roughly 600BC! The lesson is God is not to be messed with! I'd never argue all Jewish people are perfect! Just as God says all who put their faith in Jesus are saved, so He gave the land of Israel to the Jewish people forever. Yes, God puts them in the "penalty box" for disobedience! As far as Christians, God calls all who put our trust in Him to be a witness for Him! God disciplines believers when we fail to do that, just as He did 2,600 years ago, as reminding the nations near Isreal just to show He's God! OK you get the idea! Thanks for reading!

With that said, hope you like this study. I wrote a more detailed one some years back. If you want to read that, click on that link on the same page! It is still a joy to study this stuff and again I'm grateful for you reading this. If you're new here, you're always welcome to e-mail me. Thanks for reading all this!