

I Am zealous about my bride Chapters 4-24

Introduction

Chapters 4-24 all concern the same topic: Judah's sin, God's perspective on their sin and God's middle *response* to their sin.

God's first response was to send his prophets to warn and urge his people to keep covenant.

For 150 years He sent prophets to Israel (Elijah, Elisha, Hosea, Jonah, Amos, Joel, Obadiah, Micah & Isaiah)

For another 150 years after the fall of Israel, he sent additional prophets to Judah (Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk & Jeremiah) and to the exiles (Daniel & Ezekiel).

God's final response is redemption.

God's current response is judgment

God who had said repeatedly, "Do not be afraid, for I am with you," now says, "Be afraid, for I am against you."

The Mosaic Covenant

Exodus 20:1-17 (Deut. 5:6-21) – 10 commandments at Sinai (aka Horeb)

Deut. 4 (Deut.6-11, 28) – blessings for covenant fidelity & curses for covenant infidelity; these commands are for their own good ch. 10:13)

God's right to judge

God's glory is rooted in his holiness.

- "to be set apart;" unique, distinct
- to be "perfect, transcendent, or spiritually pure, evoking adoration and reverence."
- something or someone who evokes "veneration or awe, being frightening beyond belief."
- "filled with superhuman and potential fatal power."

God will not leave the guilty unpunished (Ex.34:7).

However, God takes no pleasure in judgment (Ezek.18:23,32; 33:11; 1Tim.2:4; 2Pet.3:9).

God can, must and will judge human rebellion (5:11; 7:3,4,8,9; 8:18; 9:5,10; 16:5,6,11; 18:25,29; 20:17,43; 24:14)

Ezekiel's prophecies of doom for Jerusalem.

Ezekiel showed them what God had revealed through street performances and by directly telling them what God had revealed.

- **Performance prophecies**
 - 1st - shut up in the house, bound, mute (3:24-27)
 - 2nd – the siege (4:1-3)
 - 3rd - lying on his sides (4:4-17)
 - 4th – attacking his hair (5:1-4)
 - 5th – digging through the wall of his house (12:3-16)
 - 6th - shaking while eating/drinking (12:17-20)
 - 7th – groaning; clapping and slashing with the sword (21:1-17)
 - 8th – forbidden to lament his wife's death (24:15-17)
- **Directly telling people what God had revealed**
 - They are oath breakers - Ezekiel 16 & Deuteronomy 32

Ezekiel refers back to the song of Moses as he predicts that the day of destruction has finally arrived. In fact, Ezekiel 16 appears to be a direct reference to the song of Moses.

The structure of the arguments and many of the terms used are identical.

The only difference between these passages is the imagery Ezekiel uses – the imagery of a whoring wife.

[Read Ezekiel 23 & Hosea 2]

Common themes and arrangement

Deuteronomy 32	Ezekiel 16
YHWH <i>finds</i> Israel v.10a	YHWH <i>sees</i> ¹ Jerusalem v.6
In a <i>desert/wilderness</i>	In a <i>field</i> ²
He encircles him	He passes by her
YHWH takes care of Israel v.10b-14	YHWH takes care of Jerusalem v.7a,9-13a
Like an eagle - spreading wings	Like a husband – spread garment
Feeding honey & oil	Feeding flour, honey & oil
Israel prospers v.15a	Jerusalem prospers v.13b-14
Israel forsakes God v.15b	Jerusalem forsakes God v.15a
Israel becomes idolatrous v.16-17	Jerusalem becomes adulterous v.15b-34
Arousing God's jealousy with <i>gods</i>	Arousing God's jealousy with <i>strangers</i> ³
Israel forgets its beginnings v.18	Jerusalem forgets its beginnings v.22,43
Israel angers YHWH v.16,21	Jerusalem angers YHWH v.26
Israel is punished vv.23-25	Jerusalem is punished vv.35-43
Israel is restored through atonement vv.35-43	Jerusalem is restored through atonement vv.53-63

Common words and phrases in the song of Moses & Ezekiel

- *Arrows & famine* (Ez.5:16-17; Deut.32:23-25,42)
- *My sword* (Ez.21; Deut.32:41f)

¹ Hosea 9:10 uses these terms interchangeably; the whoring wife imagery seems borrowed from Hosea 1-3, which is a prophecy to Israel that predates Ezekiel by over 200 years.

² The Hebrew terms are also used interchangeably in poetry (Josh.8:24; Job 24:5-6; Isa.43:19-20; Joel 1:19-20; 2:22)

³ The term translated gods in Deut.v.16 is translated strangers in Ezekiel v.32

- *To make jealous* (Ez.8:3; Deut.32:16,21) (c.f. 1 Ki.14:22 & Ps.78:58)

- They are a whoring wife – Ezekiel 16 & Hosea 2
Where does the whoring wife imagery come from? The use of this imagery related to prostitution appears in God's prediction of their future apostasy and exile in Deuteronomy 31:16 and is also used by the earlier prophet Hosea.
God appears to be overlaying the imagery of Deut.31:16 & Hosea 1-3 upon the themes in the song of Moses to produce a very raw depiction of the history of Israel.
Why so crude?

Common themes

Hosea 2	Ezekiel 16
YHWH takes care of Israel v.8f, Like a husband v.15f Israel prospers v.8f Israel forsakes God vv.2-7 Israel is adulterous vv.2-7 Israel forgets its beginnings v.8 Israel angers YHWH v.3f Israel is punished vv.9-13 Israel is restored through atonement vv.14-23	YHWH sees Jerusalem v.6 In a <i>field</i> He passes by her YHWH takes care of Jerusalem v.7a,9-13a Like a husband – spread garment Feeding flour, honey & oil Jerusalem prospers v.13b-14 Jerusalem forsakes God v.15a Jerusalem becomes adulterous v.15b-34 Arousing God's jealousy with <i>strangers</i> ⁴ Jerusalem forgets its beginnings v.22,43 Jerusalem angers YHWH v.26 Jerusalem is punished vv.35-43 Jerusalem is restored through atonement vv.53-63

Common words and phrases in Hosea & Ezekiel

- Wife* (Ez.16:32; Hosea 2:2)
- Whore* (Ez. 6:9; 16:15,16,17,26,28,30,31,33,34,35,41; 20:30; 23:3,5,19,30, 44; Hosea 2:5; 3:3; 4:10,12,13,14,15,18; 5:3; 9:1)
- Lewd* (Ez.16:27,36,43,58; 22:9; 23:21,27,29,35,44,48,49; 24:13; Hosea 2:10)

Idolatry as adultery

Ezekiel focuses on idolatry either directly⁵ or indirectly by reference to adultery.

At its heart idolatry is giving something in creation the reverence, trust & service that rightfully belongs to the Creator (Romans 1:18-23).

What's God's problem? What does He care what we believe or do?

- God deserves glory
- Idols are harmful

⁴ The term translated gods in Deut.v.16 is translated strangers in Ezekiel v.32

⁵ The words *idol* or *idolatry* are used 46x in 42 verses; *wood* or *stone* in reference to idolatry (20:32); places of idolatry (6:4,5,6,13); stumbling block (14:3,4,7; 18:30; 44:12)

- Idols are harmful because they're worthless

- Idols are harmful because they corrupt

- Idols are harmful because they motivate injustice

How can we spot our own idolatry/adultery?

Chapters 4-24 The Judgment of the Oath Breakers

You are doomed (chs.4-7)

4 – Siege of Jerusalem predicted

Left side 390 days...years of Israel's iniquity; Right side 40 days...years of Judah's iniquity; This goes back to 930 BC...the founding of Israel

Some combine this prophecy with a Leviticus curse (26:18) to claim it predicts the recapture of Jerusalem.⁶

5 – Judgment on abused privilege

6 – Desolation of the land

7 – Finality of the judgment

God's glory leaves the temple (chs.8-11)

8 – Idolatrous abominations in Jerusalem

9 – God's thorough destruction

10 – Judgment by fire

⁶ 390 + 40 = 430 prophetic years (360 days each); 430 – 70 (Babylonian exile) = 360 years x 7 (Leviticus curse) = 2520 years x 360 days = 907,200. Working backward from May 14, 1948 AD (Israel declares itself a nation) and subtracting 907,200 days takes us to July 15, 537 BC. This date – 25,200 (70 years captivity; Jer.25:11) takes us to July 17, 606 BC when Israel lost its independence to Babylon. The Servitude of Israel lasted 70 years but the Desolation of Jerusalem also lasted 70 years (Dan.9:2,24). If the same numbers are subtracted from the date of the recapture of Jerusalem in the 6-day war (June 7, 1967) it takes us to August 8, 518 BC and August 10, 587 BC respectively. The temple fell July 23-24 587 and the city fell a few weeks later. So, there's a 19 year gap between the loss of independence and the loss of Jerusalem and a 19 year gap between the independence of Israel and the recapture of Jerusalem.

11 – “I will judge you”

12 – Certainty of destruction

Ezekiel also foretold in Babylon what calamities were coming upon the people, which when he heard, he sent accounts of them unto Jerusalem. But Zedekiah didn't believe their prophecies, for the reason following: It happened that the two prophets agreed with one another in what they said as in all other things, that the city should be taken, and Zedekiah himself should be taken captive; but Ezekiel disagreed with him, and said that Zedekiah should not see Babylon; while Jeremiah said to him, that the king of Babylon should carry him away thither in bonds. And because they did not both say the same thing as to this circumstance, he disbelieved what they both appeared to agree in, and condemned them as not speaking truth therein, although all the things foretold him did come to pass according to their prophecies... Josephus, Antiquities, X. 7.2

13 – Lying prophets and false prophetesses

14 – Idolatrous elders denounced

15 – The parable of the vine

16 – The adulterous bride

17 – The punishment of treachery

18 – Individual responsibility before God

19 – Lamentation over Israel's kings

20 – A history of rebellion

21 – The sword of the Lord

22 – The indictment against Jerusalem

23 – The disgusting sisters

24 – The certainty of doom

Homework Assignment

Read Ezekiel chapters 25-33

Read Amos

Prepare answers for the following questions to turn in next week

1. What relationship(s) do you see between the judgment of gentiles and the covenants, if any?
2. How would you explain the laments in these chapters of Ezekiel?