



Ezekiel 23-24

Tape #7324
Ezekiel 23-24
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now to the twenty third chapter of Ezekiel. Now as a background for the twenty third chapter, which does have its difficulties, it is necessary to know that God was seeking a nation, a people, that would be a special people upon the earth. They were to be an exclusive kind of a nation in different ways. Number one, they were to be God's people, and be dedicated wholly to God. God purposed that through this nation, He would bring the Messiah into the world. Thus it was necessary for them to remain as a pure seed, a pure nation, in order that through them the Messiah may come.

God looked at His relationship to Israel much as a Husband- wife, relationship. God had made a covenant of marriage to them. He had committed Himself to them. In like manner, He desired that they commit themselves to Him, as in a marriage, holy unto the Lord, completely His, as He gave Himself for and to them, to be their God. Thus any deviation in their part, in the worship of other gods, or in the mingling with other nations and their gods, it constituted a spiritual kind of adultery. Their, their joining themselves to other gods, other forms of worship, was looked upon by God as spiritual adultery. Thus He calls them, "the adulteresses". He accuses them of whoredom when they turn from Him, and they are worshipping other gods. They were to be exclusively God's, they were to be His people.

So as we are coming now to the end of the line, the northern kingdom of Israel has already been taken captive by the Assyrians, and spread through the world. The southern kingdom is on the final legs. It, it's about to go into the final siege by the Babylonian army. It is going to also be dispersed into the world.

So God lays out in the twenty third chapter, His charge against Israel, and basically it is a charge of unfaithfulness from the beginning. Even while they were in Egypt, though they were descendants of Abraham, they had begun to embrace the worship in Egypt, the worship of the Egyptian gods. Thus even before they were brought out of Egypt, they were guilty of, of adultery in a spiritual sense, of fornication. God brought them into the wilderness, and there God revealed Himself, made His covenant, and then brought them into the land.

Now we know that they became divided into two nations after the death of Solomon, so that you had Ephraim, the northern kingdom, known as Israel. You had Judah, the southern kingdom, continuing with the Davidic line of kings.

Now God calls them...

Aholah, and Aholibah. [He said] *they are sisters. They are the daughters of one mother, but they committed whoredoms in Egypt (23:2-3).*

That's where they first began to prostitute themselves. That is where they first began to be drawn and attracted to other gods, other forms of worship.

Now the name, "Aholah", means, "her tent". The name "Aholibah", means, "my tent is in her". Now the tent is used for the word for the tabernacle, the place where they met God. It was a place of worship. So in the northern kingdom, they established their places of worship in the city of Bethel, and the city of Dan. Basically Jeroboam set up these altars in these two cities, to keep the people from the northern kingdom, from returning to Jerusalem, to worship in Jerusalem. He felt that if they go back to Jerusalem, they see the temple, they get involved in the holidays there, that soon they will be turning their loyalties back to the kingdom of Judah. Thus he established two altars. One in the northern part, the city of Dan. One in Bethel, the southernmost part of the northern kingdom. He there actually put golden calves, a part of the worship of Egypt. He said, "Now these are your gods". The people worshiped in these two cities that were established by Jeroboam. The northern kingdom went immediately into idolatry.

So God calls her, "Aholah", that is, "it's her tent", God doesn't recognize it as His place of meeting with them. However, "Aholibah", is, "my tent is in her", that is, Jerusalem was the place that God established for

the people to gather to worship Him, and to meet with Him. Thus, Aholibah the younger sister, Judah was the smaller. There were ten tribes in the northern kingdom, only two in the southern kingdom. So Ephraim was called, the older sister, Judah the younger sister.

So they began their adulteress practices in Egypt before God ever brought them out. But when the northern kingdom was established, the people became attracted to the Assyrians, and to the worship of the Assyrians.

Now basically, the Assyrians worshiped Ashtoreth, who was the female goddess of sex. Thus the worship of Ashtoreth involved licentious sexual orgies. These people of God, the northern kingdom, were attracted by these and they began to give themselves over to these sexual orgies that actually were a part of the whole worship of Ashtoreth. So the Lord speaks of..

Aholah [verse five] who played the harlot [prostitute] when she was mine; and she doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians her neighbors, Which were clothed with blue, the captains and the rulers, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding upon horses. And she committed her whoredoms with them, and with all of them that were the chosen men of Assyria, with all of those she doted: and all of their idols she defiled herself. [So they embraced the religion of the Assyrians.] And neither did she leave her whoredoms that she brought from Egypt (23:5-8):

They were still worshiping the golden calves that were set up in Bethel, thus many gods, idolatry, all forms of pagan worship, practiced by the northern kingdom of Israel.

Now as you go back in the book of the Kings, and the book of the Chronicles, as you deal with the northern kingdom of Israel, we read in their successive kings, "And they did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, and they followed after the sins of Jeroboam. And they built altars and they built the high places for worship, and they worshiped the Ashtoreth." It gives all of the sins, which was actually a turning away from the worship of God, and the worshiping of these false gods of the pagans around them. So here was Israel totally defiled, turning away completely from God, and giving her love to these other religious systems.

Wherefore [The Lord said, "because of this"], I have delivered her into the hands of her lovers, into the hand of the Assyrians, upon whom she doted (23:9).

She loved Assyria, she loved the worship of the Assyrians, so God said, "Alright, I'll just let you have, let the Assyrians take you. You can, you can see what it is to, you love them, and you love their worship, so I'll let you just see what it really is". You know they say that, "the grass on the other side of the fence is always greener".

It's interesting that you see cows in a pasture, and they may be in a green, lush pasture, but they're always standing at the fence with their head between the barbed wire, trying to get the grass outside of the fence! It's just something about nature, animal nature, that uh, that which is sort of you know, prohibited, always seems to be more attractive. But yet, when you really get into it, you find that it's, it's quite miserable.

The interesting thing is that communism actually attracted many people in the United States. There were many people that looked at communism in Russia, and they thought, "My wouldn't it be wonderful to be on an equal par with everybody", you know, and they saw communism as a real ideal! These people were sort of idealists. They were attracted to communism. But the thing was, they had never lived under a communistic system. They really didn't know what it was. They only read you know, the ideals of communism, and they were drawn by that. Many of them actually moved to Russia! They canceled their U.S. citizenship! They said, "You know I'm a communist, I'll live in Russia". But boy after awhile, when you're living with it, you find it's a, it's a horse of a different color! It isn't all that it's made up to be. We see now the horrible consequences of the communistic experience, or experiments, in Russia.

Here, they were drawn, they were attracted. Assyrians they'd looked so powerful on their horses, and that blue! The captains with that glorious blue armament and all. The people were attracted to the Assyrians. There was something about the worship and all, that they were attracted to it. God said, "Okay, you think that's great? I'll just let you, you know, you dote on them, I'll let you live with them for awhile. I'll let you be taken captive by them, and, and realize really how totally heartless, and cruel these people are!"

You know, God is a God of love, and God wants us to love, and through this love, be kind, be compassionate, be forgiving. The two great commandments is, "love God with everything, and your neighbor like yourself", and that's the basis of a relationship with God. It's a loving relationship!

When you get away from the Christian influence, and you get away from the love, it's amazing how cruel man can be! We talk about the innate goodness of man, but the Bible speaks of the innate evil of man! I would, I would challenge you, go over to Bosnia, and try to preach to the people about the innate goodness of man! Go into any war area, and try to tell the people of the innate goodness of man, see how well received your message will be! Man is cruel! I cannot in my wildest imagination, conceive the atrocities that man perpetrates on fellow man! I cannot understand the mind set that would do the cruel things that man does to his fellow man!

The Assyrians were about as cruel a people, who ever lived. You see, there was no basis in their religion for kindness, for love, for compassion. In their religious system, much as in communism, every body's out for himself. You get what you can for yourself. When you have that kind of mentality, of, "all for me", then you begin to steal, you begin to take by force, you begin to connive, and defraud, and cheat, and all of these things come into play. You find out it is a very cruel world, it is a very mean world, when you get outside of the Christian influence, in the world.

So here, they were drawn and attracted by the Assyrians. God said, "Alright, you think that's so wonderful? You dote on them, you dream, you fantasize of, Oh my how wonderful!, you know." So they came. Verse ten...

They discovered her nakedness: they took her sons and her daughters, and they slew her with the sword: and she became [Infamous, they should put an "in" in front of that,] famous ["She became infamous] among women; for they had executed judgment upon her. [That is, God's judgment was executed upon Aholibah, or Aholah.] And when her sister Aholibah saw this (23:10- 11),

The southern kingdom, when they saw the results of the sin and the worship of these gods in the northern kingdom, it should have been an eye opener to them. They should've said, "Wow look at the consequences of, of leaving God, and turning away from God!" It should've been an incentive for them, to devote themselves fully, and completely unto God. But, "When Aholibah, Judah, saw what had happened"...

she became even more corrupt in her inordinate love than her older sister Aholah, and in her whoredoms more than her sister. And she doted upon the Assyrians and her neighbours, the captains, the rulers that were clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding upon horses, all of them desirable young men. And then I saw that she was defiled. And she increased her whoredoms: for she saw men portrayed upon the walls, [They were looking at the pictures of the Babylonians, the Babylonian army.] the images of the Chaldeans that were portrayed in beautiful reddish colors, They were girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, and all of them princes to look at, and after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of their nativity: And as soon as she saw them with her eyes, she doted upon them, and sent messengers unto them into Chaldea (23:11-16).

So the southern kingdom became attracted by Babylon.

Now you remember the scripture tells us, at the time of Hezekiah, when he was sick and almost died? He prayed unto the Lord and the Lord touched him and gave him another ten years. He recovered from that illness and he lived for another ten years. There came to Hezekiah messengers from Babylon, with words of greeting, and congratulations that he had recovered from his illness. The Babylonian king sent the heads of state, ambassadors and all, down to Hezekiah with messages of congratulation and all.

While they were there, Hezekiah showed to them all of the wealth of Judah. The wealth in the temple, the gold, the silver, the vessels that were there. He sort of in a bragging way, just showed them all of the wealth. When these men went back, the prophet of God came to him, Hezekiah, and said, "Who were these fellas that were here?" He said, "Well they were guys from Babylon." He said, "What did you show them?" He said, "Well I showed them all, everything that we have. All of the treasures and all." He said, "They are going to come, and they're going to take away all of the treasures that you have displayed to them. It will linger in their minds, they'll say, 'Oh man remember all of that?'" Ultimately of course Babylon did come. This is, this is that attraction.

Now it must be acknowledged that sin is very attractive. It looks very exciting. It seems very pleasurable, on the outward side, sin looks exceedingly glamorous. Hollywood makes sin look like fantasy world, and so exciting, and so wonderful. It has a very shiny veneer. But inside, it's horrible. Like Jesus said, "The outside, they're like white washed sepulchres", the burial sepulchres, they would white wash them. They looked so nice, and neat, and clean, as they were white washed on the outside. But He said, "Within they're filled with dead men's bones, they're putrid". So sin, looks so glamorous, and exciting on the outside, but boy once you get entangled in it!

So Babylon was attracted. They saw the pictures of these Babylonians. They thought, "Oh my look at that! Gorgeous, handsome young men! All of them like princes!" So...

The Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom, and she was polluted with them, and her mind was alienated from them. So she discovered her whoredoms, and discovered her nakedness: and then my mind was alienated from her, like as my mind was alienated from her sister (23:17-18).

So alienation from God is the result of this playing with sin. You become alienated from the life of God. A terrible position to be in!

Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, in calling to remembrance the days of her youth, wherein she played the harlot in the land of Egypt. For she doted upon their paramours, whose flesh is like the flesh of donkeys. Thus thou calledst to remembrance the lewdness of thy youth, the things that transpired in Egypt. ["Your beginning of your dabbling with the other gods, and the other forms of worship."] Therefore, O Aholibah, [Judah] thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will raise up her lovers against thee, from whom thy mind is alienated, and I will bring them against thee on every side; The Babylonians, and all of the Chaldeans, Pekod, and Shoa, and Koa, and all of the Assyrians with them: and all of them desirable young men, captains, rulers, great lords, and renowned, all of them riding on their horses. But they will come against you with their chariots, and their wagons, and the wheels, and the assembly of people, and they will set against you the buckler, and the shield and the helmet: and I will set judgment before them, and they shall judge you according to their judgments (23:19-24).

"You want them? You're drawn to them, you're attracted to them. Alright, I'll turn you over to them, and let you realize the consequences."

And I will set my jealousy against thee, and I will deal furiously with thee: and they shall take away thy nose and thine eyes and the remnant shall fall by the sword: and they shall take thy sons and thy daughters; and the residue shall be devoured with fire (23:25).

"You want them, you're drawn to them? Alright, I'll let you find out what they're really about." The cruelty of the Assyrians. In history you have the records and the pictures of the Assyrians leading the captives of war back to Assyria. In the pictures, of the people being led as captives, their faces had been mutilated. The Assyrians would cut off their noses, they would cut off their ears, they would gouge out their eyes. Then they would put hooks through a person's nose, and they would lead them on a leash, with the hook through the nose. "These are the kind of people you're attracted to?", God said. "You've fallen in love with them. You think they're so wonderful? You think they're so great? Alright, I'll let you just live with them. I'll turn you over to them, and you'll find out what it's really all about!" So God allowed then the southern kingdom also to go captive unto the Babylonians, to the Assyrians.

And they will strip you from your clothes, they'll take away your fair jewels. [They took of course, the treasure.] Thus will I make thy lewdness to cease from thee, and thy whoredoms brought from Egypt: so you shall not lift up your eyes unto them, nor remember Egypt any more. ["I'll give you a real dose of it, so much of it that it'll make you sick, and you'll never want it again."] For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will deliver you into the hand of whom you hate, into the hand of them from whom your mind is alienated: And they shall deal with you hatefully, they'll take away all of your labour, [That is, all, you know, everything that you worked for will be lost.] and they shall leave you naked and bare: and the nakedness of your whoredoms shall be discovered, both your lewdness and your whoredoms. And I will do these things unto you, because [because] thou hast gone awhoring after the heathen, and because thou art polluted with their idols (23:26-30).

You know, one of the worst things that God can do for people sometimes, is give them what they want! Give them what they're attracted to. Sometimes that's the worst thing that could ever happen to you, is God say, "Okay, you want that? You're insisting on that? Alright, you can have it". Man that's often times just a day of real tragedy, when, when God gives you that which you're lusting after, that which you're desiring. It can be a day of destruction.

So, "I will do these things unto you because you've gone awhoring after the heathen, and because you are polluted with their idols", the pollution of the heathen practices. I really could not, in a mixed crowd, tell you of the abominations of the practices of the worship of these pagan gods. God said, "You're drawn to that, you're attracted to that? I'll turn you over to it."

For you have walked in the way of your sister; [The northern kingdom of Samaria.] therefore I will give her cup into your hand. [The cup of judgment that she received, you will also receive.] And you will drink of your sister's cup deep and large: and you shall be laughed to scorn you'll be held in derision; because it contains much. [The cup of God's wrath, and judgment.] Thou shalt be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, and with the cup of astonishment and desolation, with the cup of your sister Samaria. And you will drink it and drink it to the bottom, and you shall break the shards thereof, and pluck off thine own breasts: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God. Therefor thus saith the Lord God; Because you have forgotten me, [Now God gives the, the charges, this is the indictment, "you've forgotten me"], you've cast me behind your back, therefore bear thou also thy lewdness and thy whoredoms (23:31-35).

It is a tragic day in the history of any nation, when that nation tries to turn its back upon God. I should've brought it tonight, I didn't, but I have a list of rulings by the Supreme Court, and by the Federal Courts, that have come forth in the last forty years, since 1947. Some of these rulings are appalling! We need to pray, and pray earnestly for our nation. The Supreme Court is almost turned around. Hopefully, hopefully, we're going to see some changes in the decisions made by the Supreme Court!

But some of the decisions under the Warren Court are just devastating as far as ruling God out of our national life. An interesting ruling of the court is that a teacher cannot read the prayers that were offered in Congress and in the Senate, at the beginning of the sessions. They can't be read in the public schools, though they are a part of the congressional record. I mean, all kinds of decisions through the courts, as they are turning our back nationally, on God. That was the mistake of Judah. "You have forgotten me. You have turned your back on me, in order that you might indulge in your lewdness, and in your whoredoms."

And the Lord said moreover unto me; Son of man, will you judge Aholah and Aholibah? yes, you will, declare unto them their abominations; That they have committed adultery, blood is on their hands, with their idols they have committed adultery, they have caused their sons, whom they bore unto me, to pass for them through the fire, to devour them (23:36-37).

"They threw their children into the fires, unto Molech, human sacrifice, something that God said was an abomination unto Him. Yet, here they were practicing it. God's people! "I have given you these beautiful sons, but yet you've thrown them into the fire unto Molech that they might be devoured."

Moreover this day they have done unto me: they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and they have profaned my sabbaths. For they have slain their children to their idols, and then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it; and, lo, thus have they done in the midst of my house (23:38-39).

Horrible, unthinkable! They would go to the pagan worships of Molech, and they would take their children, and throw them in the fire to appease their god of pleasure! You see, Molech, the god of pleasure along with the Ashtoreth, the, the sexual goddess and, and sort of the goddess of pornography, so as a result of the pornography, there was a heightened sexual stimulus, and the people were stimulated sexually, because of all of the pornography of Ashtoreth. They were worshiping Molech, the god of pleasure, so there was all kinds of lewd, lascivious worship rites involving sexual intercourse.

As the result there were a lot of unwanted babies. Lot of babies being born that no one wanted. So because these were conceived as they were worshiping in these pagan rites, they would bring these babies then to these bonfires that were built, and they would toss the babies into the bonfires. Then they would go to the temple to worship God! God said, "You know you go out and you kill your babies, and then you come in here, and, and sit in my temple. You profane my temple! Coming in that condition, the very same day that

you sacrificed your child, you would come in!”

And furthermore, you have sent for men to come from far, unto whom a messenger was sent; and, lo, they came: for you did wash thyself, you painted your eyes, you decked yourself with ornaments, [“You sought to make yourself attractive to these foreigners.”] And you sat on a stately bed, and you prepared a table, whereupon you have set mine incense and my oil. And a voice of a multitude being at ease was with her: and with the men of the common sort were brought the Sabeans from the wilderness, and they put their bracelets [In other words, they just completely polluted themselves, anybody, everybody, they were willing to lie with.] And they went in unto her, as they go into a woman that is playing the harlot: so they came unto Aholah and unto Aholibah, the lewd women. And the righteous men, they shall judge them after the manner of adulteresses, and after the manner of women that shed blood; because they are adulteresses, and blood is in their hands. [They will be judged in righteousness.] For thus saith the Lord God; I will bring up a company upon them, and I will give them to be removed and spoiled. And the company shall stone them [Now under the law if you committed adultery, you were stoned to death, if you committed murder, you were stoned to death, and so, God said, “The righteous men will fulfill the law, in that they will be stoned, so I will bring up the company, and they will stone them,”] and they will dispatch them with their swords; they shall slay their sons and their daughters, they will burn their houses with fire. And thus will I cause lewdness to cease out of the land, that all of the women may be taught not to do after your lewdness. And they shall recompense your lewdness upon you, and ye shall bear the sins of your idols: and ye shall know that I am the Lord God (23:42 & 23:44-49).

Verse forty three, I think we skipped over that. It’s interesting thing, it’s actually when they were old, old prostitutes, worn out. Yet, they continued you know in their, in their adulteress practices.

I said unto her that was old in adultery, Will they now commit whoredoms with her (23:43)?

Old and worn out, but yet to the end, unfaithful unto God, deserving the judgment of God.

Chapter 24

So again in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, write the name of this day, even this same day: for the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem on this day (24:1-2).

Now you go back to the book of Jeremiah, chapter fifty one, and Jeremiah tells you that, “On the, in the ninth year of the king, of the reign of king Zedekiah, in the tenth month, and the tenth day of the month, came the Babylonian army unto Jerusalem, and began the siege.”

Now here is Ezekiel four hundred miles away, without any means of communication like we have today. It doesn’t seem to us to be such a big thing you know, because we have telephones, we have radios, we have all kinds of ways of communicating news across the world. But in those days they didn’t! They had only messengers to go by horse. It would take weeks to get a message from Jerusalem, to Babylon. But yet there in Babylon, here’s Jeremiah marking the calendar, and pointing to the people, “This is the day that the siege has begun in Jerusalem. This is the day that marks the beginning of the end! Jerusalem is going to surely fall. This day marks the beginning of the siege.”

So that God is showing His ability, knowing all things, to reveal to the prophet Ezekiel, four hundred miles away in Babylon, the very day that the siege began in Jerusalem. Confirmed by the prophesies of Jeremiah, who was in Jerusalem, who was recording it as history. Whereas Ezekiel four hundred miles away is receiving it as divinely inspired, a message from God.

Utter this parable unto this rebellious house, say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Set on a pot, [Big, boiling pot.] pour water into it: And gather pieces of the flock [The lamb out of the flock.] and put it into the pot, every good piece, the thigh, the shoulder; and fill it with choice bones. And take the choice of the flock, and burn also the bones under it, [They used to use bones for fire when they would be short on wood.] and make it boil well, and let it seethe the bones in it. And therefore thus saith the Lord God; Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose scum is in it, and whose scum is not gone out of it! bring it out piece by piece; and let no lot fall on it (24:3-6).

It used to be that you take your sacrifice to the priest, certain peace offerings, they would boil it, and

then they would pull out the flesh. They would cast lots and, “this goes to you, this goes to the priest, and all”, but He said, “Just pull it out, don’t cast lots on it”.

For her blood is in the midst of her; she set it up upon the top of a rock; she poured it not on the ground, to cover it with dust (24:7);

Normally when you sacrificed something, or killed an animal, slaughtered an animal, you would pour the blood on the ground, and then you’d cover it with dirt as a means of hygiene, it was part of the law. But, “the blood poured on a rock, not covered with dirt.”

That it might cause fury to come up and take vengeance; for I have set her blood on the top of a rock, that it should not be covered. Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Woe to the bloody city of Jerusalem! I will even make the pile for the fire great. Heap on the wood, kindle the fire, consume the flesh, spice it well, and let the bones be burned (24:8-10).

When you, when the water goes out and you’ve got just the, the bones and all in there, beginning to burn, they smelled horrible as they begin to burn. As you boiled bones, there is a certain scum that forms on the top of the boiling, and this, this scum is usually taken off. You’re making the broth and all, you take off the top, that scum that forms, but, “just leave it there, and just keep boiling it until the water’s gone and just burn the bones, and burn the scum”.

And set it empty upon the coals thereof, [The big pot, just,] that the brass of it may become just hot, and may burn, that the filthiness of it may be just molded into it, that it just becomes a part of the metal, [“Just burn it until it’s black, and just becomes, fuses into the metal itself, that the filthiness of it may be just molded into it”.] that the scum of it may be consumed. For she hath wearied herself with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her: her scum shall be in the fire. In thy filthiness is lewdness because I have washed you, but you were not washed, and you shall not be washed from your filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon you (24:11-13).

God said, “I’ve sought to cleanse you, I’ve worked with you, but you went right back to your filth. You wouldn’t be cleansed of your filth”.

How God longs for your life to be pure! How God longs for you to be holy! To walk in purity, and to walk in holiness, and how patient God is when we become marred, and despoiled by sin, to just wash us and cleanse us! To lift us up out of the mud, and to wash us off, and to set us again, you know on a solid footing! But people just go right back, over and over again, right back into the same pollution from which God has, has taken them out! God, God finally said, “Just, you know, I’m through. I’m not gonna try to wash you anymore. I’m just gonna let you go in your filthiness until you’ve been judged, you received the recompense of this.” God spared them so long! You see, there are, there are actions that bring natural, inevitable consequences.

Now if you jump off of a roof, your defying the law of nature. You may get by with it a few times, but ultimately, you go higher, and higher, and higher you know, all the way! God says, “Okay, I won’t hold you up this time, I’ll let you crash. I’ll let you, I’ll let you experience the consequence of this.”

People dabble around with drugs and God is so gracious in helping them, in, in, in you know, dealing with them, drawing them away from it. But they go back, they go back, until finally, God says, “Okay, that’s what you want? Go for it.” Again, allowing you to do those things that your heart is inclined to do. But then, you now receive, and you begin to realize what these things actually do, the damage, the destructive power that they actually have! God allows you to see it.

He will shield you for awhile. He’s patient! But there comes an end to the patience of God, the longsuffering of God, and to the protection that God gives to you. Ultimately, He’ll let you, if you continue to persist in your sin, He’ll let you begin to experience the real consequence of that sin. Though you’ve been protected and shielded for a time, finally God will say, “Okay that’s it. You’ll learn your lesson.” He’ll let you really taste of the bitterness of that sin that you’ve been attracted to, and drawn to. Then, oh! Your life becomes so miserable that you, you just, you feel like you’re in hell! In a sense, I think you are experiencing some of the torments of hell, as you have begun to reap the natural consequences of that sin that you’ve been doting on, and dabbling with. So God said, “I’m just gonna let you reap the consequences, you’re gonna be burned, until I’ve caused all of my fury to rest upon me”.

I the Lord have spoke it: it shall come to pass, I will do it; I will not go back, [Now many, many times God went back, people would plead, they'd turn to God, and God would say, "Okay", and He's patient, He's forgiving, He's loving, but God said, "I'm not gonna change this time, you've gone too far".] according to your ways, [You see, it's a natural consequence of the path that you've chosen, "according to your ways".] according to your doings, you will be judged, saith the Lord God (24:14).

It's time that people wake up to the fact that God has given to us rules, and laws for a good life. For good relationships with Him, and a good relationship with others. He's laid down the rules. These rules are often times looked upon by us as too restrictive. We defy those laws, those rules. We go beyond the borders that God has prescribed. When we do, and when we persist in going beyond the borders, then God often allows us to begin to reap the consequences, and the misery, and the suffering that He was trying to protect us from.

At the present time, there is a multitude of terrible sexually transmitted diseases in our country. Not just AIDS. There are all types of sexually transmitted diseases. Herpes, chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, and a multitude. New strains of gonorrhea that are resistant to the old medicines that we've been able to use. New strains of syphilis.

Now if you're not engaging in promiscuous sexual activity, if you're obeying the scriptures, you don't have to worry about one of these horrible diseases that are being transmitted by promiscuous sex. You see you don't have to worry about all of these horrible things that are out there, these horrible viruses and all that are, that are being transmitted by sex. You don't have to worry about them, just as long as you're obeying the word of God, you're being true to your wife, and to that relationship, you have no worries!

But I'll tell you what, if you're a very sexually active person, then you've got a lot to worry about. You see you're, you're defying the laws of God. Now God may protect you for a time, God may keep you for a time, and He may not! We have many people in the church who have AIDS. Some of them declared that they received it by one, outside of marriage encounter. Maybe you say, "Well I've been lucky!" No. God's been gracious to you, but He won't always be. You keep defying the law of God, and sooner or later, you're gonna find yourself inflicted with one of these sexually transmitted diseases, that you'll probably have, and need to be treated the rest of your life. As a person is suffering the consequences of these sexually transmitted diseases, I wonder if, when they're in the final stages, if you go up and say, "Hey was it worth it? Pretty exciting night huh? Really thrilling huh? But look at you now. Was it really worth it?"

God gave us laws to protect us. You defy those laws, and you're open, you're open game. God isn't always going to protect you. So God said, "You know, alright you've gone too far. I've spoken of the judgment. It's going to come to pass. I'm gonna do it. I'm not gonna go back. I'm not gonna change! You're going to receive the things that come, as the consequence of the things that you've been doing. I'm not gonna protect you any longer. I'm not gonna shield you any longer."

But you know what the ridiculous thing is? When a person begins to suffer the consequences of their own sin, they always want to blame God. "Why would God allow this to happen to me?" Well, hey wait a minute! You've been defying the law of God. You've been doing the things God told you not to do. Why blame God for it? God's not the one responsible for the consequences! He was doing everything to keep you from it! Warning you, and you were ignoring it!

So the word of the Lord came again, [In verse fifteen] to Ezekiel, and it said, Son of man, behold, I take away from you the desire of your eyes with a stroke (24:15-16):

It's interesting God would refer to his life, as the desire of his eyes, that should be the truth of every husband. His wife should be the desire of his eyes. I love that phrase. God said, "I'm gonna take her away from you with a stroke."

yet you're not to mourn nor weep, neither shall you allow tears to run down your cheeks. Don't cry, don't make any mourning for the dead, but put your turban on your head, don't put on ashes, but put your turban on your head, put your shoes on your feet, and cover not your lips, and don't eat the bread of men. So I spake [spoke] to the people in the morning: [Told the people what God had told him.] and in the evening his wife died; and I did as the Lord commanded me in the morning. And so the people said to me, Will you not tell us what these things are to us, what you are doing? So I answered them, The word of the Lord came

unto me, saying (24:16-20),

It's interesting, he was doing things that provoked questions. You know, it's interesting a lot of times people ask the right questions. If you're doing the right thing, people ask the right questions, and the questions give you the opportunity of sharing. "You know, I watched you and you didn't get upset when that guy said that to you. How come? You know, he, you didn't really, I mean, you really had the guy. You could've, how come?", you know. Hey I'm glad you asked! You know, it gives you that opportunity to share the truth of God with people when your life is walking circumspectly before the Lord, walking in the Spirit. It creates good questions, which create good opportunities for you to share what God has done! So they questioned him, "How come you're not mourning, you're not crying? There's no tears!" "And I answered them, The word of the Lord came to me, saying,"...

Speak to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, [That is, the temple in Jerusalem, it's gonna be destroyed.] the excellency of your strength, [The strength of the nation is in it's relationship with God, and the temple representing the place where the people met God, "the excellency of the strength of the nation's gonna be destroyed".] the desire of your eyes, [Oh how they prided themselves in that glorious temple, and in captivity, they kept thinking about the temple, and the place of the worship of God and all, and it was just sort of the heart of the nation, from a physical, but unfortunately, not a spiritual standpoint.] and your sons and your daughters whom you have left behind [in Jerusalem] are gonna fall by the sword. And you shall do as I have done: [Ezekiel is telling them.] you're not to cover your lips, you're not to eat the bread of men. You're to put your turbans on your heads, your shoes on your feet: you're not to mourn nor weep; but you shall pine away for your iniquities, and mourn one toward another. [In other words, "Don't cry for the dead, cry for yourself, and cry for your iniquities, the sin that has provoked this judgment of God".] Thus Ezekiel is unto you a sign: according to all that he has done so shall you do: and when this comes, you will know that I am the Lord. ["When the word comes to you that Jerusalem is fallen, your children have been slain, the temple destroyed, then you'll know that I am the Lord that has spoke this to you."] Also, thou son of man, shall it not be in the day when I take from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereon they have set their minds, their sons and their daughters, ["When I've destroyed Jerusalem, their temple, their children".] That he that escapes in those days and comes to bring you the message, to cause you to hear with your ears what has happened? In that day shall your mouth be opened to him which is escaped, and thou shalt speak, and be no more silent: and thou shalt be a sign unto them; and they shall know that I am the Lord (24:21-27).

This is the last prophecy to the adulteress nation. As we go into the next chapter, he's going to prophesy against the nations round about Israel. He'll prophesy against Tyre, he'll prophesy against the Ammonites, and all. No more prophecies to the people of God until the news comes that, "Jerusalem has been destroyed, the temple has been wiped out, everybody's been slain", you know and they hear the horrible news. Then he begins to prophesy again. But the interesting thing, as he begins to prophesy again, he'll prophesy of the future glory that God is gonna bring on these people who've been wiped out in judgment.

Oh the stubborn love of God! You know, He just won't let go! They have failed, they're reaping the judgment, and God has said His final word, "It's gonna happen. I'm not gonna change. It's, it's set, and that's it." No more word. No more message, silent until the day comes when they tell you, "Everything is gone it's all wiped out! The temple! Everybody's been killed!", and all. Then, "you're to open up your mouth, you're to prophesy again. But you'll prophesy of God's glorious glory that He will pour upon the nation in the latter days." How God will begin again a work. God will bring them back into the land. God will establish them there.

So as you get into the latter part of Ezekiel, it's the things that are happening today in Israel. The regathering of the nation, and the things that will transpire. Then, the glorious new temple that will be built. The worship again that will take place in Jerusalem. You go out into the yet, things that are yet future. Now some of the latter part has already been fulfilled.

You get into chapters thirty six, thirty seven, they're already fulfilled. Chapter thirty eight is about to be fulfilled. It just goes on out, and out to the glorious future that God has for these people who've failed Him so miserably.

You know, sometimes we fail, fail rather miserably. But God's final word to us is not of judgment and failure, but it is of the glorious kingdom that He has prepared for us, as we follow after Jesus Christ, and as we seek after Him. It's really no great sin to fall in the mud. The sin is lying there. You know, if you fall, get up. Let the Lord wash you off, keep going. Don't wallow in it, don't just lie there in it, because then, it is sin.

John said, "My little children, I write unto you that you sin not, but if we sin, we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ, the righteous One." Yes, ideally it would be wonderful if we didn't sin. But the truth of the matter is, we do. John, writing to them said, "If you say you have no sin, you just deceive yourself. The truth isn't in you. But if you confess your sin, He's faithful, and just to forgive you, and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness". Yes we fail, but God is gracious, and God is kind, and God is love, and God is forgiving, and He washes us, and He holds us by the hand, to sustain us and to keep us.

So we've come to sort of the end of this portion of the book of Ezekiel. The next portion will be prophecies, and fascinating prophecies against Tyre, and you'll, you'll see some fascinating things as we look at these prophecies against these nations, and as we then look at what history tells us. Next week especially, chapter twenty six, how that the prophecy of Ezekiel is so exacting with what history records of the destruction of Tyre. You'll, you'll see with what interesting exactness God speaks. Then as we get into the future of Israel, as God begins again to work with them, in preparing the nation for the second coming of His Son Jesus Christ.

Father we thank You for Your word, and for the warnings that You give. We thank You for Your law, a guide to life, for the law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul! The testimonies of the Lord are sure, making wise, the simple. Lord, may we be wise, and understanding in Your ways, that we might walk Lord, in Your way, in a life that is pleasing to You. Cleanse us Lord, wash us and we shall be clean. Lord give us that strength to stand against the powerful temptations of the world, the allurements, and the enticement of the enemy. Lord may we live a life that is dedicated, and committed to obedience to Your commands. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shall we stand?

May the Lord strengthen your resolve to work, worship and to serve Him fully, and completely. May this week be a week of spiritual growth, and, and the work of God's Spirit within your life, drawing you into that deeper, and richer commitment unto the things of the Lord!