

**Ezek. 21:1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
Ezek. 21:2 Son of man, set thy face toward Jerusalem, and drop *thy word*
toward the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel,
Ezek. 21:3 And say to the land of Israel, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I *am*
against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off
from thee the righteous and the wicked.**

Ezekiel continues to receive messages from the Lord. This section is a continuation from the previous chapter and is directed toward Jerusalem, the holy places (the temple), and the land of Israel in general. The people remaining in Jerusalem needn't think that they are safe now that some of their number have been taken captive. The Lord is going to ensure that judgment is complete; it will impact the righteous as well as the wicked. We know that the righteous in the city were sealed as described in chapter 9. I equate it to how the events of the world impact believers today. God will ensure that it works for the good.

Rom. 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. Though we may not understand how this side of heaven, we can be sure that God is true to His word and faithful in all that He does or allows. He is in control even when it seems He is not. I was reading in Isaiah again last night and this verse comes to mind.

Is. 52:7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, **Thy God reigneth!**

Note that it is the sword of the Lord that will bring about this judgment. Scripture identifies the Lord's sword as His word (4/07) and His Word as His Son, and all judgment has been given to the Son.

Eph. 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Rev. 19:15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations:

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

John 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

I am reminded that the effect of His word is just as sure and effective as that of a physical sword in the hands of men.

Heb. 4:12 For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

"my sword...his sheath" - In this case God is speaking the word and men will be used to carry out the judgment.

Ezek. 21:4 Seeing then that I will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked, therefore shall my sword go forth out of his sheath against all flesh from the south to the north:

Ezek. 21:5 That all flesh may know that I the LORD have drawn forth my sword out of his sheath: it shall not return any more.

Again, emphasis is made that the judgment will be complete according to God's word. Everyone in the land will be affected in some way, i.e., death by sword, famine, pestilence, captivity, etc. This is necessary to the testimony of the truth of God's word.

"it shall not return any more" – Obviously, this is not a statement of non-stop judgment. In reading through the different translations it would seem that it is a statement that the declared judgment will be completed with this stroke of His sword. When Neb shows up on the scene this time, he will not have to return to complete the job. In other words, the sword will not be sheathed until the declared judgment has been completed.

Ezek. 21:6 Sigh therefore, thou son of man, with the breaking of *thy* loins; and with bitterness sigh before their eyes.

Ezek. 21:7 And it shall be, when they say unto thee, Wherefore sighest thou? that thou shalt answer, For the tidings; because it cometh: and every heart shall melt, and all hands shall be feeble, and every spirit shall faint, and all knees shall be weak *as* water: behold, it cometh, and shall be brought to pass, saith the Lord GOD.

The Hebrew for the word *sigh* indicates to "groan or mourn." The *loins* are equated with the *reins* in humans, according to Webster; this would be referencing the place of "affections and passions." That would explain why some of the translations reference a broken heart. The point is that Ezekiel is to physically depict an attitude of deep sorrow and anguish before the people. When they ask him what is wrong, he is to answer that it is because of the message of God's word. That message is meant to strike utter fear in the heart of all those in Judah because the time of God's longsuffering has ended and the time of judgment has come. It would also be devastating news to the captives who held out hope for their homeland and their loved ones at home.

Ezek. 21:8 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Ezek. 21:9 Son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus saith the LORD; Say, A sword, a sword is sharpened, and also furbished:

Ezek. 21:10 It is sharpened to make a sore slaughter; it is furbished that it may glitter: should we then make mirth? it contemneth the rod of my son, *as* every tree.

Sharpening and furbishing a sword is making preparation to ensure the effectiveness of the weapon when wielded. We know that Nebuchadnezzar (and his armies) is the *sword* being referenced. The Hebrew for *contemneth* states "to spurn or disdain." "My son" is a reference to Israel/Judah.

Ex. 4:22 And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, *even* my firstborn:

The Hebrew for *rod* includes a reference to “branch and scepter” and would seem to be a reference to the king or ruler. In other words, Neb is not intimidated in any way by the leadership of Judah; in fact, he feared no other ruler (i.e., every tree).

Ezek. 21:11 And he hath given it to be furbished, that it may be handled: this sword is sharpened, and it is furbished, to give it into the hand of the slayer. Ezek. 21:12 Cry and howl, son of man: for it shall be upon my people, it *shall be* upon all the princes of Israel: terrors by reason of the sword shall be upon my people: smite therefore upon *thy* thigh.

Ezek. 21:13 Because *it is* a trial, and what if *the sword* contemn even the rod? it shall be no *more*, saith the Lord GOD.

The power of God’s sword, His word, is being given to Nebuchadnezzar, the slayer. It is being given to Neb specifically to wreak judgment and destruction in the land of Judah and its inhabitants. Notice the statement of ownership—“my people.” God is faithful to His word; He made a covenant with Abraham and His Son, Jesus, that will not be thwarted by the disobedience and rejection of Abraham’s descendants.

Gal. 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

To smite the thigh is an action of grief and remorse; this should be the response of the people to God’s message through Ezekiel.

Verse 13 is hard to get a handle on; every translation is a bit different. This judgment will also serve as a trial, a test or examination. It will separate those who are repentant and remorseful from the disobedient hard of heart. The sword will strike at the rod, which at this time was Zedekiah; he was to be the last king of Judah. The phrase “it shall be no more” seems to reference the fact that no kings ruled in Judah/Israel after the Babylonian captivity. The next king to rule in Israel will be Jesus, the son of David, the Son of God, during the 1000-year millennial reign.

Is. 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Is. 9:7 Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Luke 1:31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

Luke 1:32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

Rev. 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Ezek. 21:14 Thou therefore, son of man, prophesy, and smite *thine* hands together, and let the sword be doubled the third time, the sword of the slain: it is the sword of the great *men that are slain*, which entereth into their privy chambers.

Ezek. 21:15 I have set the point of the sword against all their gates, that *their* heart may faint, and *their* ruins be multiplied: ah! *it is made bright, it is wrapped up for the slaughter.*

To *smite* the hands is much different than to clap the hands. To smite the hands is an expression of anger. When I did a word search, the best example was found in Numbers and is supported below in verse 17.

Num. 24:10 And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together:

Ezekiel is declaring God's anger with His people.

"let the sword be doubled the third time" – Adam Clarke's commentary made the point that Nebuchadnezzar came against Judah three times: against *Jehoiakim*, against *Jeconiah*, and against *Zedekiah*.

When Neb comes against Judah this last time, no one will be able to hide from the sword God has placed in his hand. God will see that all of their defenses are breached, fear will be struck in every heart, and more ruins will result from the attack. God's sword is going to be publicly and effectively wielded.

Ezek. 21:16 Go thee one way or other, *either on the right hand, or on the left, whithersoever thy face is set.*

Thee is a reference to the sword, Neb. The "right" hand is a reference to the south, and the "left" hand is a reference to the north. In other words, Nebuchadnezzar can choose to strike in any direction and he will be successful.

Ezek. 21:17 I will also smite mine hands together, and I will cause my fury to rest: I the LORD have said *it.*

The beautiful truth of this verse is that the judgment will come to an end. Though his judgment is a result of His anger, God's fury will finally rest (settle down, cease).

Ezek. 21:18 The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying,

Ezek. 21:19 Also, thou son of man, appoint thee two ways, that the sword of the king of Babylon may come: both twain shall come forth out of one land: and choose thou a place, choose *it* at the head of the way to the city.

Ezek. 21:20 Appoint a way, that the sword may come to Rabbath of the Ammonites, and to Judah in Jerusalem the defenced.

Ezekiel receives yet another message from the Lord. The wording of the KJV is a bit confusing; I like the wording of the NLT the best.

“Son of man, make a map and trace two routes on it for the sword of Babylon’s king to follow. Put a signpost on the road that comes out of Babylon where the road forks into two— one road going to Ammon and its capital, Rabbah, and the other to Judah and fortified Jerusalem.

Ezek. 21:21 For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination: he made *his* arrows bright, he consulted with images, he looked in the liver.

Ezek. 21:22 At his right hand was the divination for Jerusalem, to appoint captains, to open the mouth in the slaughter, to lift up the voice with shouting, to appoint *battering* rams against the gates, to cast a mount, *and* to build a fort.

Ezek. 21:23 And it shall be unto them as a false divination in their sight, to them that have sworn oaths: but he will call to remembrance the iniquity, that they may be taken.

Ezekiel now speaks of the time when Neb will follow the route illustrated on the map. When he gets to the fork in the road, he must choose whether to go toward Jerusalem or Rabbath. He decides to employ the use of divination.

- “made his arrows bright” – The commentaries describe this process as placing the names of the cities to be attacked on arrows and then shaking the quiver until one fell out. The first one to fall out would be the place attacked. It is similar to casting lots.
- “consulted with images” – This would reference seeking guidance from idols of false gods.
- “looked in the liver” – According to JFB they looked into the liver to determine “the success, or failure, of an undertaking by the healthy, or unhealthy, state of the liver and entrails of a sacrifice.” According to the NIV Commentary they examined the color and its markings to determine which way to go.

We know that it did not matter what method Neb chose to use; the Lord was going to ensure that he took the road to Jerusalem. He appointed his captains to give instructions for the taking of the city by using battering rams and building ramps and forts (or battering towers).

Again, I think the wording of the NLT gives a clearer picture of verse 23.

“The people of Jerusalem will think it is a mistake, because of their treaty with the Babylonians. But the king of Babylon will remind the people of their rebellion. Then he will attack and capture them.”

Ezek. 21:24 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your transgressions are discovered, so that in all your doings your sins do appear; because, *I say*, that ye are come to remembrance, ye shall be taken with the hand.

The Lord is basically saying that the people of Judah have been so blatant and public with their disobedience to him and their wicked deeds, they have brought judgment upon themselves now; it cannot be delayed. Neb will be successful; many will be taken captive.

Ezek. 21:25 And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity *shall have an end*,

Ezek. 21:26 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this *shall not be the same*: exalt *him that is low*, and abase *him that is high*.

Ezek. 21:27 I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no *more*, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it *him*.

The “prince of Israel” being referenced is Zedekiah. He was a wicked king as described in the book of Kings.

2Kings 24:18 Zedekiah *was* twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother’s name *was* Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

2Kings 24:19 And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done.

2Kings 24:20 For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

This same truth was repeated almost word for word in Jeremiah 52. Zedekiah was privileged to have the prophet Jeremiah ministering to him and the nation at this time, but he chose to reject the prophet and the Lord he represented. The Lord was going to take the throne away from Zedekiah (“abase him that is high”). The next one who would take the throne will be Jesus (the low one who would be exalted). Jesus is the one with the rightful claim to the throne, and God the Father will ensure that He is given His rightful position. The act of exalting one that is low and abasing one that is high is from an earthly perspective of the ones being referenced.

“overturn, overturn, overturn....until” – This would indicate that the position of King in Jerusalem/Judah/Israel will not be allowed to be reestablished until the coming of the One who alone has the right to possess it, Jesus Christ, to set up His earthly kingdom. (cf comments at verses 11-13)

Ezek. 21:28 And thou, son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning the Ammonites, and concerning their reproach; even say thou, The sword, the sword *is drawn*: for the slaughter *it is furbished*, to consume because of the glittering:

Ezek. 21:29 Whiles they see vanity unto thee, whiles they divine a lie unto thee, to bring thee upon the necks of *them that are slain*, of the wicked, whose day is come, when their iniquity *shall have an end*.

The wording is often very hard to understand in the KJV, especially in the prophets. I will again utilize the NLT.

“And now, son of man, prophesy concerning the Ammonites and their mockery. Give them this message from the Sovereign LORD: My sword is drawn for your slaughter; it is sharpened to destroy, flashing like lightning! Your magicians and false prophets have given false visions and told lies about the sword. And now it will fall with even greater force on the wicked for whom the day of final reckoning has come.”

The Ammonites were descendants of Lot through his daughter. This nation established itself as enemies of Israel almost from its beginnings. They refused to

make provision for the children of Israel during their exodus from Egypt. At least one of Solomon's wives, the mother of Rehoboam, was an Ammonite.

2Chr. 12:13 So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned: for Rehoboam *was* one and forty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name *was* Naamah an Ammonitess.

The Ammonites worshipped Molech, the awful deity to whom the people offered their children as sacrifices. Solomon was guilty of following after this god.

1Kings 11:5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.

1Kings 11:6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as *did* David his father.

1Kings 11:7 Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that *is* before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.

(What a sad commentary on a man to whom God had given so much.)

As the leader or king, so go his followers or subjects.

Ezek. 21:30 Shall I cause *it* to return into his sheath? I will judge thee in the place where thou wast created, in the land of thy nativity.

Ezek. 21:31 And I will pour out mine indignation upon thee, I will blow against thee in the fire of my wrath, and deliver thee into the hand of brutish men, *and* skilful to destroy.

Ezek. 21:32 Thou shalt be for fuel to the fire; thy blood shall be in the midst of the land; thou shalt be no *more* remembered: for I the LORD have spoken *it*.

Because of their treatment of God's people and the wickedness that they introduced to Israel through the worship of their false gods, the Lord had determined that His sword of judgment would wipe out the Ammonites. They too would experience destruction at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar and his armies. Adam Clarke references Josephus that this happened about five years after the destruction of Jerusalem.

Unlike the people of Judah, the people of Ammon would be destroyed "in the land of thy nativity"; they would not be taken captive. Their destruction would be complete ("thou shalt be no more remembered"). The Ammonites did not survive as a strong nation; they were destroyed as prophesied. They weren't completely destroyed as a people since some of the children of Ammon will be around at the time of the antichrist according to Daniel 11.

Dan. 11:41 He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many *countries* shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, *even* Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

The children of Ammon would appear to be represented by a segment of those in current day Jordan. The city of Amman, Jordan, today stands in the place of Rabbath, the capital city of the Ammonites, from biblical times.