

Ezek. 5:1 And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp knife, take thee a barber's razor, and cause *it* to pass upon thine head and upon thy beard: then take thee balances to weigh, and divide the *hair*.

Ezek. 5:2 Thou shalt burn with fire a third part in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled: and thou shalt take a third part, *and* smite about it with a knife: and a third part thou shalt scatter in the wind; and I will draw out a sword after them.

Ezek. 5:3 Thou shalt also take thereof a few in number, and bind them in thy skirts.

Ezek. 5:4 Then take of them again, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; *for* thereof shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel.

This chapter leads directly into the next object lesson. Ezekiel is told to take a barber's razor and shave his head and his beard. Again, this is unlawful for a priest to do and would require great humility and submission on the part of Ezekiel.

Lev. 21:5 They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard, nor make any cuttings in their flesh. Before gathering up the hair and utilizing the scales to divide it into three equal parts, he is to take a few hairs and bind them in the hem of his garment. The hair is going to be used to illustrate the results of the siege. A third of the hair represents those that will die in Jerusalem during the siege (cf v12). A third of the people will be killed by the enemy. Another third will be driven into exile. The few hairs bound in Ezekiel's garment appear to represent the remnant that God is ever preserving of Israel. Because it is addressing the remnant, my first thoughts upon reading verse 4 is that this is picturing a refining fire that gets rid of impurities.

Ezek. 5:5 Thus saith the Lord GOD; *This is* Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries *that are* round about her.

Ezek. 5:6 And she hath changed my judgments into wickedness more than the nations, and my statutes more than the countries *that are* round about her: for they have refused my judgments and my statutes, they have not walked in them.

At this point the LORD is explaining the accountability that accompanied Israel's position as His chosen people among the nations. It was no secret among the surrounding nations that Israel claimed a privileged position in relationship to Almighty God. In essence, I think the LORD is saying that because Israel claimed relationship with Him and then proceeded to boldly reject Him in disobedience, she had positioned herself to be judged more harshly than those nations that had never accepted the LORD to begin with. Jesus utilized this same thought process.

Matt. 11:21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

Matt. 11:22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

Matt. 11:23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

Matt. 11:24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

Ezek. 5:7 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye multiplied more than the nations that *are* round about you, *and* have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept my judgments, neither have done according to the judgments of the nations that *are* round about you;

This verse continues the thoughts from the last verses. Because of the context, I believe the *multiplication* is a reference to their wicked practices. The last part of verse seven indicates that the wickedness of Israel now exceeded the wickedness of the nations around her.

This generates in my mind a comparison of America to the nations around her. Our nation was founded on Christian principles with a clear recognition of God's authority as the Creator of the universe. I'm sure the nations around us are confused when they hear us referenced as a Christian nation. Our actions reflect a far inferior commitment to our "God" than do the actions of those who follow false gods. We have chosen wickedness in rejection of God just as publicly as Israel did, and I am sure our judgment as a nation is just a certain.

Ezek. 5:8 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, *am* against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations.

Because of Israel's blatant rejection of God's authority, He is going to punish her in the sight of those before whom she dishonored Him. It's like the LORD is saying that in spite of the fact they act as though He is non-existent, He is going to declare Himself in judgment against them.

Ezek. 5:9 And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thine abominations.

Ezek. 5:10 Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds.

Ezekiel is stating that God's judgment on Israel that is to come will be far more severe than they have ever experienced in the past. The severity of this judgment will cause the people to turn to cannibalism among each other. To my knowledge, never before or since have the Jewish people been driven to such a practice. They were dispersed as captives among the nations, but that would be repeated once more after Rome conquered Jerusalem in 70 AD.

The phrase "will execute judgments" (plural) also leaves room for me to think that the prophet is referencing the whole of time encompassed from the time of the prophecy until they again became a nation in 1948. Prophecy often referenced gaps in the times being referenced. One of my favorite examples is regarding Jesus' reading of Isaiah 61. He declared His fulfillment of part of that

prophecy, but stopped in the middle of it since it referenced His coming to set up His earthly kingdom.

Is. 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are bound*;

Is. 61:2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, [this is where He stopped] and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

Is. 61:3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

Ezek. 5:11 Wherefore, *as I live*, saith the Lord GOD; Surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish *thee*; neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity.

God's anger was intensified because the people had defiled the temple. This was a subject addressed by the prophet Isaiah.

Is. 1:11 To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

Is. 1:12 When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

Is. 1:13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; *it is* iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

The Hebrew for *sanctuary* states "a consecrated thing or place, especially, a palace, sanctuary (whether of Yhwh or of idols) or asylum..."

At first read it seems as though they had even taken their idols into the temple. After doing a bit of searching, I found that Manasseh had erected altars in the temple courts at one point.

2Kings 21:3 For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.

2Kings 21:4 And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I put my name.

2Kings 21:5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.

I think this reference extends beyond the temple to include the city. The people were practicing idol worship in Jerusalem, the place that God had set apart on planet earth as His.

1Kings 11:36 And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there.

The LORD is very clear that He is jealous for the honor of His name.

Is. 48:10 Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.

Is. 48:11 For mine own sake, *even* for mine own sake, will I do *it*: for how should *my name* be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another. Scripture also declares His jealousy for Jerusalem in particular.

Zech. 1:14 So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.

The last part of this verse is a statement that the judgment to come is sure.

Ezek. 5:12 A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them.

This verse is an explanation of verses 2-4 above. I think it is significant to note that the Jews have experienced the sword of their enemies throughout the past 2,000 years.

Ezek. 5:13 Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I the LORD have spoken *it* in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them.

The good news in this verse is that the time of judgment will have an end point, a time when God's wrath will be spent. The Hebrew for *zeal* is a reference to jealousy or envy. This ties in with the thoughts about the honor of His name above. The LORD is described as jealous in many scriptures.

Ex. 34:14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous God:

Deut. 4:24 For the LORD thy God *is* a consuming fire, *even* a jealous God.

Nah. 1:2 God *is* jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and *is* furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth *wrath* for his enemies.

I think it is also important to note that the people will know that their judgment has come from YHWH, the covenant God of Israel.

Ezek. 5:14 Moreover I will make thee waste, and a reproach among the nations that *are* round about thee, in the sight of all that pass by.

Ezek. 5:15 So it shall be a reproach and a taunt, an instruction and an astonishment unto the nations that *are* round about thee, when I shall execute judgments in thee in anger and in fury and in furious rebukes. I the LORD have spoken *it*.

Both the people and the land will suffer under the judgment of God. The land will experience drought (waste) and the people will be disgraced / shamed (reproached). There is a verse in Jeremiah that seems to shed some light on the message.

Jer. 24:9 And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for *their* hurt, *to be* a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them.

This description of the attitude of the nations toward Israel has been true for centuries. The Hebrew for *instruction* is a reference to God's purpose in this judgment—to chasten and correct them.

God's judgment upon His own people should also serve as a message of warning to the church. God's character never changes.

Mal. 3:6 For I *am* the LORD, I change not...

Heb. 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. He will just as surely judge those who claim His name today as He has demonstrated in His dealings with Israel in the past. He is still a jealous God, and the honor of His name is as precious to Him as ever.

Ezek. 5:16 When I shall send upon them the evil arrows of famine, which shall be for *their* destruction, *and* which I will send to destroy you: and I will increase the famine upon you, and will break your staff of bread:

Ezek. 5:17 So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I the LORD have spoken *it*.

"When" – a statement of surety; judgment is coming.

There is a section in Deuteronomy that speaks of God's *arrows*.

Deut. 32:23 I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them.

Deut. 32:24 *They shall be* burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust.

Deut. 32:25 The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling *also* with the man of gray hairs.

This is just another example of the consistency of God's word. This is another case in which I wish I knew Hebrew because so many words are indicated as being understood or inserted. This message of judgment is addressed to Israel; these arrows are being used in judgment against Israel.

I do believe it is true that the nations can expect judgment in return for their treatment of Israel since that truth is declared in other parts of scripture, but I don't believe that it is the context here.