

Ezek. 9:1 He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man *with* his destroying weapon in his hand.

Ezek. 9:2 And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them *was* clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar.

Ezekiel listens as the Lord calls out loudly to some other men and gives them orders to begin destruction of the city. (Reminder: Ezekiel is still experiencing a vision.) The first interesting observation is that these men "have charge over the city." These men are obviously spiritual beings.

Scripture is full of examples of the interaction of supernatural beings with natural man. It also seems clear that there are specific angelic beings assigned to specific locations to assist in accomplishing God's purposes in battle against Satanic forces as they seek to thwart those purposes. The first example that comes to mind is in Daniel 10 when an angelic messenger had to battle an evil spirit that exerted authority in Persia before he could get to Daniel to explain his dream. The struggle lasted 21 days, and the messenger declared that he finally succeeded with the help of Michael, who is described in chapter 12 as "the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people."

Another example that comes to mind is regarding Elijah asking the Lord to open the eyes of his servant to see the spiritual forces surrounding them with protection (cf 2Kings 6).

Paul was very clear to declare our struggle to be with the spiritual forces of evil.

Eph. 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

The writer of Hebrews declares that the angels are to serve as ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, those who have looked to God in faith for deliverance.

Heb. 1:13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

Heb. 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

The intervention of spiritual forces for good and evil are a truth of life on planet earth.

These men are pictured with destroying weapons in hand. They are pictured as coming from the north, which was the direction from which most of Israel's enemies came. Accompanying these warriors is a man clothed in linen and carrying a writer's inkhorn at his side. These seven men enter the temple area to stand beside the brazen altar.

Ezek. 9:3 And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which *had* the writer's inkhorn by his side;

Ezek. 9:4 And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

God's presence is pictured going to the threshold of the temple entrance. He instructs the man with the writer's inkhorn to go throughout the city of Jerusalem and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that are distressed by the wickedness of the people.

I can't help but be reminded of events to come as described in the book of Revelation when the 144,000 Jewish witnesses are sealed for protection during the judgments of the tribulation period.

Rev. 7:3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

Rev. 7:4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: *and there were* sealed an hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

It is interesting that in both instances the mark of protection is placed in the forehead, the part of our body that represents authority and the place of decision.

Ezek. 9:5 And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity:

Ezek. 9:6 Slay utterly old *and* young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom *is* the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which *were* before the house.

Ezek. 9:7 And he said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city.

The Lord then speaks to the other six and tells them to follow the man that is marking people and to kill everyone that is not marked—both old and young, girls, children and women. They are to begin at the temple with the two groups of men that had been singled out in the previous chapter—the 70 elders and the 25 sun worshippers. They are not to consider the fact that this is God's house; they are to destroy the people where they find them. Point is made that these men immediately obey.

The Hebrew for the word *man* is defined as "a mortal." We know that God deals with individuals—both men and women. It's always a bit disconcerting when scripture puts the focus on the men when making judgments. It is very clear in scripture that God has placed man in the authority position and that his actions directly impact all those in authority under him. This should be a very sobering thought for all Christian fathers and pastors in particular.

Ezek. 9:8 And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?

At this point, Ezekiel falls on his face before the Lord and cries out for mercy for his people. He can't believe that the Lord is going to completely destroy the nation as He judges the people of Jerusalem. The number of those being

destroyed was overwhelming compared to the numbers that were marked for protection.

I have to remind myself that Ezekiel is in the midst of a vision. What he is seeing is representative of what God is going to do. God is always faithful to protect His obedient children from His hand of judgment. He either warns them to get out of the area to be judged or He seals them with supernatural protection from the wrath of His judgment.

Ezek. 9:9 Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The LORD hath forsaken the earth, and the LORD seeth not.

Ezek. 9:10 And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, *but* I will recompense their way upon their head.

The Lord righteously declares that the actions of the people in both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah were replete with sin and rebellion toward God. They are justifying their wickedness by accusing God of forsaking His people. The time for judgment has come and He intends to exact full recompense for their actions; the judgment will fit the crime.

As a parent, I know how hard this is to do. No matter what your child does to deserve punishment, it seems it is always tempting to want to reduce that which was deemed necessary once we see their response to the pain involved—be it physical or emotional. Our heart is to rescue them from consequences. The thing to understand is that the punishment is an act of love that should serve to protect them from even worse consequences by applying judgment sufficient to deter them from further disobedience. When we lessen the punishment, we lessen the deterrent. We also lessen the positive impact of our words of warning regarding future transgression. God is a faithful Father and a God of love; He does not shrink from His responsibilities in the role of Father.

Ezek. 9:11 And, behold, the man clothed with linen, which *had* the inkhorn by his side, reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me. At this point in the vision, the man with the inkhorn who marked the people to be protected had returned and declared that he had done as commanded.