

The Book of Ezekiel

Lesson 3: Judgment on the Mountains and the End Has Come -- Ezekiel

6:1-7:27

Stand for a moment on a high place in the hill country of Israel. Picture the green slopes rising on every side, the ridges where the morning mist still clings, the old familiar mountains the people had known since their fathers crossed the Jordan. There is something stubborn and beautiful about mountains. They outlast us. They were here before we were born and they will be here after we are gone. And precisely because they seemed so permanent, the people of Israel had crowned them with shrines. On nearly every high hill and under every green tree they had built their altars, set up their idols, and burned their incense to gods that could not save them. They had taken the good earth God gave them and turned it into one vast temple to nothing. So when the word of the LORD comes to Ezekiel in this chapter, it does not come to a person first. It comes to the mountains. Son of man, set your face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them. God is about to speak to the very hills, because the hills had become the scene of the crime.

There is a tenderness hidden in the severity here, and you must not miss it. When God judges the high places, He is not lashing out blindly. He is going after the specific places where His people gave their hearts away. The altars will be broken, the incense stands cut down, the bones of the worshipers scattered around the very idols they trusted. It is a grim picture, and it is meant to be. But underneath the wreckage runs one refrain, over and over, like a drumbeat you cannot ignore: you shall know that I am the LORD. That phrase will sound through these two chapters again and again. It is the whole point. God is not destroying for the sake of destruction. He is tearing down the false so that, at long last, His people will know the only One who is truly God. Sometimes the kindest thing love can do is to take away what we have made into an idol.

Then chapter seven changes the tempo entirely. If chapter six is a steady hammer falling on the high places, chapter seven is an alarm bell that will not stop ringing. An end! The end has come upon the four corners of the land. Now the end is upon you. The word end tolls through the chapter like a funeral bell. The day has come; the time has come; the day of trouble is near. This is the day of the LORD's wrath, the day every prophet had warned about, and now it is no longer on the horizon. It is at the door. The buyer is not to rejoice and the seller is not to mourn, because the ordinary business of life is about to be swallowed whole. There will be no time to enjoy a bargain or grieve a loss. The trumpet is blown, but no one goes to battle, for the wrath has fallen on the whole multitude.

And here is the line that ought to make every one of us go quiet and search our own hearts. They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be as an unclean thing. Their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD. Think of that. The very wealth they had trusted, the bank accounts of the ancient world, the treasure

they thought made them safe, will be flung into the gutters as worthless. It could not satisfy their souls, the text says, because it was the stumbling block of their iniquity. When the day of the LORD comes, the price of nothing on earth can buy a single hour of safety. So let us walk slowly and soberly through these two chapters together, because the God who tears down the high places is the same God who says, with a longing you can hear under every blow, you shall know that I am the LORD.

Group Discussion: Where in these two chapters do you hear the refrain you shall know that I am the LORD, and what does it teach us about God's purpose even in the severest judgment He brings on His people?

Personal Reflection: What is the high place in your own life right now, the thing you have quietly set up on a hill and given your heart to, trusting it to make you safe or satisfied, and what would it mean to let God tear it down so that you would know Him as the only true God?

Read Ezekiel 6:1-7:27

Study Questions

1. In Ezekiel 6:1-7 God tells Ezekiel to set his face toward the mountains and prophesy against the high places, altars, and idols. What does this teach us about how seriously God takes false and unauthorized worship, and why does He aim His judgment so specifically at the places where His people gave their devotion to idols?
2. The people had built shrines on nearly every high hill and under every green tree (6:13). What are the high places in your own life, the comfortable, familiar things you have quietly enthroned and given a devotion that belongs to God alone?
3. Six times in these chapters God says the purpose of His judgment is that they shall know that I am the LORD (6:7, 6:10, 6:13, 6:14, 7:4, 7:27). What does this repeated refrain reveal about God's ultimate aim even when He is tearing things down, and how does it correct the idea that God's wrath is merely blind anger?

4. God promised that even in judgment He would leave a remnant who would remember Him and loathe themselves for the evils they had committed (6:8-9). Where in your own walk has God used a painful season to bring you to honest self-knowledge and genuine repentance rather than mere regret?
5. Ezekiel 7 announces that the end has come and that this is the day of the LORD's wrath, no longer distant but now upon them (7:2-7, 7:10-12). How does Scripture's teaching on a coming day of reckoning shape the way a faithful person ought to live, and why is it dangerous to assume the day of accounting is always far off (compare 2 Peter 3:3-10)?
6. The text says the buyer should not rejoice and the seller should not mourn, because the day had come that swallowed up the ordinary business of life (7:12-13). Where have you let the buying and selling, the gains and losses of daily life, crowd out a sober readiness for the day you will stand before God?
7. God declares that their silver and gold could not deliver them and would be cast into the streets as an unclean thing, because their wealth had become the stumbling block of their iniquity (7:19). What does this teach us about the true worth of money and possessions, and about the folly of trusting riches for the security only God can give?
8. Honestly, how much of your sense of safety and well-being is quietly resting on your finances, your savings, or your possessions, and what would change in you if you truly believed that silver and gold cannot deliver you in the day of the LORD?

9. These chapters portray the day of the LORD as a real and certain day of wrath against persistent, unrepented sin, yet they also hold out a remnant who will know the LORD. The New Testament teaches that the final day of the Lord is just as certain, but that Christ Himself is now our refuge from the wrath to come (Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:9–10; 5:9; Acts 17:30–31). What do these passages teach about how the wrath of God is satisfied and how a person actually escapes it, and how is that deliverance received by a trusting, obedient response to the gospel rather than by silver, gold, or any work of our own?
10. Looking back over these two sobering chapters, name one specific idol or false security the Lord has exposed in you through this study, and one concrete way you will turn from it this week so that you may truly know that He is the LORD.

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Deuteronomy 12:1–4, God’s command to tear down the high places and not worship Him after the manner of the nations, the very law Israel had broken; Hosea 4:13, the people sacrificing on the tops of the mountains and under every green tree, the same sin Ezekiel names; Zephaniah 1:14–18, the great day of the LORD when neither silver nor gold will be able to deliver them; 1 Timothy 6:17–19, the charge not to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God; Romans 5:9, justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him, the deliverance silver and gold could never buy

More studies available on ChurchOfChristBibleStudies.com