

Ezekiel, Son of Man
Class 9 - May 28, 2014
Reading: Ezekiel 31-33

Chapter 31

We continue our warning against the king of Egypt. His boast is that he is too mighty to be made to fall. Yet now God reminds him of the recent history of Assyria. The Egyptians rushed to aid Assyria against Nebuchadnezzar and were defeated.

Jeremiah 46:2 Against Egypt. Concerning the army of Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, which was by the River Euphrates in Carchemish, and which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon defeated in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah

It is interesting that the entire poem depicts Assyria, not Egypt, and yet it is told to speak of Egypt's fall. As Assyria was great (compared to a tree in Eden, like the king of Tyre), so is Egypt. Yet Assyria fell completely. Thus Egypt too would fall.

Chapter 32

A continuation of the condemnation of Egypt. As with the nations cursed in this book of prophecy, the king of the nation is uniquely identified, not as a personification of that nation, but as one person who had the power to repent and change the nation, and failed to do so. Josiah led Judah to a brief reprieve, and thus the kings of the nation of Egypt is particularly to blame.

What is the obligation of a nation towards God? It is not the same as the individual, and it does not have the benefit of individual righteousness (Romans 1:16). Yet if God judges nations for national sin, then there is presumptively sin a nation commits of itself (Romans 3:20).

We find that nations have certain obligations. In Romans 13 we are told to submit to nations because of their authority:

Romans 13:1-4 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.

From this passage we see several obligations:

1. To cause fear on those who are evil
2. To bring wrath on the evil doer

When we consider the condemnations of Ezekiel, we can see that nations are expected to show some submission to God as the authority of men. Kings (or presidents) who refuse to submit to God are accountable to God, as we see with Tyre, Egypt, and Judah.

Chapter 33

We were introduced to the watchman concept in chapter 3, and stated we would wait until chapter 33 to further delve into this idea.

The Watchman motif is the most powerful and demanding push towards personal evangelism in the entire Bible. The Watchman is the person who knows the will of God. If he warns others, then he has discharged his obligation. However, if he does not, then their blood is on his hands.

Often we in the church demand numeric results to our work, or we regard it as a failure. This passage is a direct rebuke of this thinking. Whether men listen or not is not the fundamental point of the passage; it is that God demands we warn others of the destruction that is coming.

The second part of the chapter is the news that Ezekiel has been warning the leaders of Judah in exile, the news he said would cause their spirits to melt. Refugees from Jerusalem have arrived, and report that the city has fallen. Ezekiel tells us that his mouth has been opened. In some fashion he has been forced to restrain himself since the earliest visions, per chapter 3:26. Now he is permitted to open his mouth, to express his own emotions and feelings. From this point on he will be allowed to weep, to mourn, and to pronounce God's hope in latter chapters.