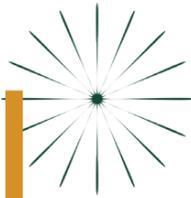


EZEKIEL



SYMBOLS, SERMONS AND VISIONS

PART 3

Judgement on Judah

READ EZEKIEL 18:19-32

INTRODUCTION

This chapter in Ezekiel deals with God speaking to the Israelites about their individual sin and the consequences of that sin. People often think that their sin, as long as it isn't hurting anyone else, is no big deal. There are two problems with this line of thinking that must be addressed in our own daily lives.

First, is the notion that, as long as I am not hurting anyone, then my sin is fine. This line of thinking insinuates that sin only affects the one performing that sin. This is, at best, a half truth and at worst a full-blown lie to appease the guilty conscience. There may be sins that are done in the secret places that seem to not affect anyone else but that is never the case. A man that commits the sin of lust may think that he is doing so in private but has no idea what kind of damage he may be doing to his future relationships with women. The bank robber who "only steals from the government" doesn't realize that he is causing others harm in their work environment. All sin has ripple effects that emanate from the source. There is also someone else that gets hurt anytime a person sins. God. He is with us all and is hurt by our actions against His Word. There is no getting around it that even if we feel like our sin is not hurting anyone else in this world, it hurts God.

Secondly, we may live in a culture that thinks "if it feels right, do it" but no matter what we have heard or what others try to tell us, our sin is a big deal and even the smallest of infractions will have eternal consequences. (Romans 6:23, Isaiah 59:2, 1 John 3:4) We cannot look so lightly upon an action in our life that has such resounding eternal consequences. There is no room for error when we are dealing with a perfect God. There may be some that don't like this and think it is too narrow of a path and they are correct, that path is narrow. (Matthew 7:13-14) God doesn't require a "good person", He requires perfection and none of us can reach that level of perfection. (Romans 3:23) Thankfully, there is hope in Jesus Christ who died to forgive us of those sins and to save us from the consequences of them.

EZEKIEL



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever had someone else's sin affect you or your life? How did that impact your outlook on that person? Knowing how you felt, do you ever justify your sin by saying it won't affect anyone else?
2. How do you think God feels when we sin against Him? Why?
3. When has there been a time in your life that you have treated your sin as less than what it really was? What made you try to make less of your sin? Do you think it is a good idea to belittle our sin?
4. Do you treat your sin as something that breaks God's heart? How can you better understand the effect of your sin on others as well as on God?
5. Have you ever sinned and, when consequences came, asked God "why me?" Why do you think God doesn't like that? How can we be better?

WRAP UP

The children of Israel were being punished by God but He tells them that He will give them a new heart. He says in verse 32 that He takes no pleasure in the death of the one who dies. He is a caring God that truly wants a close relationship to His people. This is important to understand because God does care for us and doesn't want to see us living a sinful life. Not because He doesn't want us to have "fun" but because He doesn't want to see us die. We choose sin often but we must change and learn to choose Jesus instead.