

# Ezekiel 14–15 – “The Disciplined Life”

Wednesday, March 6, 2024

## PRINCIPLES

1. Let God be First

2. Let us be Faithful

3. Let us be Fruitful

4. Lest Life be Fatal

## PURPOSE in the PAIN (DISCIPLINE)

1. To Capture my Heart (14:5)

2. To Know the LORD (14:8)

3. To No Longer Stray (14:11)

The 4<sup>th</sup> message on the certainty of judgment.

### Ezekiel 14:1-3

The word of the LORD came to Ezekiel (a word of knowledge).

Ezekiel 14:3 (NLT) “...they have embraced things that will make them fall into sin. Why should I listen to their requests?”

Ezekiel 6:9 informs us that God was crushed by the way they had idols in their hearts.

Unlike the elders in Jerusalem whose idolatry was more visible, these elders in Babylon had idols that were invisible to man...but not to God.

God sees our hearts.

Pastor Chuck Smith, *“We may be too sophisticated to put idols in our houses or to bow down to statues. But what is inside our hearts? What do we really value deep down inside? Anything that comes before God in our lives is an idol – and God sees that.”*

Would God speak to them? SHOULD God speak to them? NO!

Alexander, *“This verse is important for those who come to Scripture seeking guidance. No true direction can be given to those who have erected idols in their hearts.”*

Instead of giving these elders the information they wanted (What will happen over there in Jerusalem? How long will we be here in Babylon), God instructed Ezekiel to give them the information they needed – God saw their idolatry, and would not only answer, but act accordingly!

### Ezekiel 14:1-5

Not only were they guilty of idolatry; but they were completely guilty of hypocrisy.

"Ezekiel's not going to truly, totally answer you," God says, "I will. And I will deal with that idolatry right there deep in your heart!"

So, I, the Lord, will give them the kind of answer their idolatry deserves. I will do this in order to capture the hearts of all my people who have turned from Me to idolatry.

To grab them, not by the hair, or the hand, or the head, but by the heart.

A big question to ask ourselves, "Does God have my heart?"

Have you ever stopped to think, that might just be WHY you're going through what you're going through?

**Proverbs 23:26 (NKJV)** "My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways."

Charles Bridges, *"The command is an invitation of love. Think about that. Think about how right, how reasonable, how attractive it is, how much it is beyond everything else. How much more than any other joy is the delight of giving your **heart** to the tender, compassionate love of your dying Savior! And then, having made him the object of your desires, be determined to be resolute in rejecting every temptation."*

### **Ezekiel 14:6-8**

Repent (turn) (run away from those idols; that life).

Setting yourself up to stumble, is in one sense, planning on sinning, but having the audacity to go to a prophet (such as Ezekiel), to hear the word. God Himself will answer, and it won't be with mere words; believers will be disciplined, non-believers will be judged. So much so that that person becomes a sign to see, a Proverb to say.

**Numbers 26:10 (NKJV)** "...and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up together with Korah when that company died, when the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men; and **they became a sign.**"

Ezekiel not only addresses the hypocritical elders, he addresses the false prophets:

### **Ezekiel 14:9-11**

(False prophets who have crossed the line too many times)

In 1 Kings 22:19-23 we have the account of God allowing (not authoring), a lying spirit to deceive King Ahab, which led to his death.

Notice again...the purpose of the punishment (v. 11). That they would no longer stray away.

**Psalms 95:10 (NKJV)** "For forty years I was grieved with *that* generation, and said, 'It is a people who go astray in their hearts, and they do not know My ways.'"

(Quoted in Hebrews 3:10)

God will “go after” those who stray...that we would forever stay!

**Matthew 18:12-14 (NKJV)** “What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? <sup>13</sup> And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that *sheep* than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. <sup>14</sup> Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.”

The next section reminds us to follow God personally (God has no grandchildren).

#### **Ezekiel 14:12-14**

It's not periodic unfaithfulness, it's persistent unfaithfulness.

Resistant, insistent, consistent unfaithfulness.

God would stretch out His hand – and there'd be famine in the land!

But what if Daniel was there? (a contemporary and outstanding Spiritual man)

But what if Noah was there? He found grace.

But what if Job was there? (Blameless, upright; feared God, shunned evil)

God would still judge the land. This reveals to us that salvation is personal and their sin was severe! God has no grandchildren.

Righteousness is imputed to our accounts when we place our faith in Christ. Those of us in the New Covenant look back to the cross. Those in the Old Testament (Covenant) looked forward to the cross.

#### **Ezekiel 14:15-14:20**

Pastor Chuck Smith, *“As with Noah, Daniel, and Job, your righteousness in Christ can bring only you salvation. It won't deliver your family or anyone else.”*

**Romans 1:16-17 (NKJV)** “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, *‘The just shall live by faith.’*”

**2 Corinthians 5:20-21 (NKJV)** “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Imagine how horrible when God sends all four at once!

**14:21 For thus says the Lord God: "How much more it shall be when I send My four severe judgments on Jerusalem—the sword and famine and wild beasts and pestilence—to cut off man and beast from it?"**

### **Ezekiel 14:22-23**

Ezekiel tells the people when they see the conduct of the future captives from Jerusalem, this "vile" in exile, they will know God's judgment on Jerusalem was just.

### **Ezekiel 15:1-5**

We don't see things made from the wood of Grape Vines. It's crooked, soft, sappy, and brittle. Not even good to make a peg. Its purpose is to bear fruit.

David Guzik, *"It's interesting to consider that nowhere in Ezekiel 15 is there mention of fruit, either in the presence or absence of it. This was a dramatic way Ezekiel communicated that at this point in Israel's history, there was absolutely no fruit to speak of. It was a non-issue."*

There are numerous Old Testament passages which refer to the people of Israel as a vine: Psalm 80:8–16, Isaiah 5:1–7, Jeremiah 2:21, Ezekiel 15:1–8, 17:5–10, and 19:10–14, and Hosea 10:1.

(Interesting when you compare Ezekiel 15 to **John 15**)

Not to mix metaphors but **\*Matthew 3:7-10** is relevant, not only to the absence of godly fruit, but the absence of God's grandchildren.

Pastor Chuck Smith, *"Israel was likened to a vine that didn't bear fruit. God's purpose had been for Israel to demonstrate to the world the blessings that came to those who made God their King and their Lord. But Israel failed to acknowledge God, and thereby failed to bear fruit."*

### **Ezekiel 15:6-8**

Where there's faith, there will be fruit. The absence of fruit led the judgment of God.

**Matthew 7:16–20 (NKJV)** "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup> Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup> A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup> Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup> Therefore by their fruits you will know them."

**It's tragic that Israel was a fruitless vine. What about us?**