
EZEKIEL 5: 1 You, son of man, take a sharp sword; You shall take it as a barber's razor to you, and shall cause it to pass on your head and on your beard: then take balances to weigh, and divide the hair.

In this chapter the prophet shows, under the type of hair, the judgments which God was about to execute on the inhabitants of Jerusalem by famine, sword, and dispersion, Eze 5:14. The type or allegory is then dropped, and God is introduced declaring in plain terms the vengeance that was coming on the whole nation which had proved so unworthy of those mercies with which they had hitherto been distinguished, Eze 5:5-17.

Verse 1

Take thee a sharp knife - Among the Israelites, and indeed among most ancient nations, there were very few edge-tools. The sword was the chief; and this was used as a knife, a razor, etc., according to its different length and sharpness. It is likely that only one kind of instrument is here intended; a knife or short sword, to be employed as a razor.

Here is a new emblem produced, in order to mark out the coming evils.

1. The prophet represents the Jewish nation.
2. His hair, the people.
3. The razor, the Chaldeans.
4. The cutting the beard and hair, the calamities, sorrows, and disgrace coming upon the people. Cutting off the hair was a sign of mourning; see on Jer 45:5 (note); Jer 48:37 (note); and also a sign of great disgrace; see 2Sam 10:4.
5. He is ordered to divide the hair, 2Sam 10:2, into three equal parts, to intimate the different degrees and kinds of punishment which should fall upon the people.
6. The balances, 2Sam 10:1, were to represent the Divine justice, and the exactness with which God's judgments should be distributed among the offenders.
7. This hair, divided into three parts, is to be disposed of thus:
 1. A third part is to be burnt in the midst of the city, to show that so many should perish by famine and pestilence during the siege.
 2. Another third part he was to cut in small portions about the city, (that figure which he had portrayed upon the brick), to signify those who should perish in different sorties, and in defending the walls.
 3. And the remaining third part he was to scatter in the wind, to point out those who should be driven into captivity. And,
 4. The sword following them was intended to show that their lives should be at the will of their captors, and that many of them should perish by the sword in their dispersions.
 5. The few hairs which he was to take in his skirts, 2Sam 10:3, was intended to represent those few Jews that should be left in the land under Gedaliah, after the taking of the city.

6. The throwing a part of these last into the fire, 2Sam 10:4, was intended to show the miseries that these suffered in Judea, in Egypt, and finally in their being also carried away into Babylon on the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar. See these transactions particularly pointed out in the notes on Jeremiah, chapters 40, 41, 42. Some think that this prophecy may refer to the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes.

EZEKIEL 5: 2 A third part you shall burn in the fire in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled; and you shall take a third part, and strike with the sword around it; and a third part you shall scatter to the wind, and I will draw out a sword after them.

EZEKIEL 5: 3 You shall take of it a few in number, and bind them in your skirts.

EZEKIEL 5: 4 Of these again you shall take, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; from it shall a fire come out into all the house of Israel.

EZEKIEL 5: 5 Thus says the Lord GOD: This is Jerusalem; I have set her in the midst of the nations, and countries are around her.

Verse 5

This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations - I have made this city the most eminent and the most illustrious in the world. Some think that these words refer to its geographical situation, as being equally in the center of the habitable world. But any point on a globe is its center, no matter where laid down; and it would not be difficult to show that even this literal sense is tolerably correct. But the point which is the center of the greatest portion of land that can be exhibited on one hemisphere is the capital of the British empire. See my Sermon on the universal spread of the Gospel.

EZEKIEL 5: 6 She has rebelled against my ordinances in doing wickedness more than the nations, and against my statutes more than the countries that are around her; for they have rejected my ordinances, and as for my statutes, they have not walked in them.

Verse 6

She hath changed my judgments - God shows the reason why he deals with Jerusalem in greater severity than with the surrounding nations; because she was more wicked than they. Bad and idolatrous as they were, they had a greater degree of morality among them than the Jews had. Having fallen from the true God, they became more abominable than others in proportion to the height, eminence, and glory from which they had fallen. This is the common case of backsliders; they frequently, in their fall, become tenfold more the children of wrath than they were before.

EZEKIEL 5: 7 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Because you are turbulent more than the nations that are around you, and have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept my ordinances, neither have done after the ordinances of the nations that are around you;

EZEKIEL 5: 8 therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, even I, am against you; and I will execute judgements in your midst in the sight of the nations.

EZEKIEL 5: 9 I will do in you that which I have not done, and which I will not do any more the like, because of all your abominations.

Verse 9

I will do in thee that which I have not done - The destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar was one of the greatest calamities that ever fell on any nation or place before; and that by the Romans under Titus exceeded all that has taken place since. These two sackages of that city have no parallel in the history of mankind.

EZEKIEL 5: 10 Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in your midst, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgements on you; and the whole remnant of you will I scatter to all the winds.

Verse 10

The fathers shall eat the sons - Though we have not this fact so particularly stated in history, yet we cannot doubt of it, considering the extremities to which they were reduced during the siege. The same is referred to by Jeremiah, Lam 4:10. Even the women, who were remarkable for kindness and humanity, boiled their own children, and ate them during the siege.

Will I scatter into all the winds - Disperse you, by captivity, among all the nations of the earth.

EZEKIEL 5: 11 Therefore as I live, says the Lord GOD, surely, because you have defiled my sanctuary with all your detestable things, and with all your abominations, therefore will I also diminish you; neither shall my eye spare, and I also will have no pity.

EZEKIEL 5: 12 A third part of you shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in your midst; and a third part shall fall by the sword around you; and a third part I will scatter to all the winds, and will draw out a sword after them.

Verse 12

A third part of thee - See the note on Eze 5:1-4 (note).

EZEKIEL 5: 13 Thus shall my anger be accomplished, and I will cause my wrath toward them to rest, and I shall be comforted; and they shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken in my zeal, when I have accomplished my wrath on them.

Verse 13

I will cause my fury to rest - My displeasure, and the evidences of it, shall not be transient; they shall be permanent upon you, and among you. And is not this dreadfully true to the present day?

EZEKIEL 5: 14 Moreover I will make you a desolation and a reproach among the nations that are around you, in the sight of all that pass by.

EZEKIEL 5: 15 So it shall be a reproach and a taunt, an instruction and an astonishment, to the nations that are around you, when I shall execute judgements on you in anger and in wrath, and in wrathful rebukes; (I, the LORD, have spoken it;)

EZEKIEL 5: 16 when I shall send on them the evil arrows of famine, that are for destruction, which I will send to destroy you: and I will increase the famine on you, and will break your staff of bread;

Verse 16

The evil arrows of famine - Famine and pestilence are represented as poisoned arrows, inflicting death wherever they wound. The ancients represented them in the same way.

EZEKIEL 5: 17 and I will send on you famine and evil animals, and they shall bereave you; and pestilence and blood shall pass through you; and I will bring the sword on you: I, the LORD, have spoken it.

Verse 17

So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee - Wild beasts always multiply in depopulated countries. In England, wolves abounded when the country was thinly peopled, it is now full of inhabitants, and there is not one wolf in the land. Nebuchadnezzar and his Chaldeans may be called here evil beasts. He is often compared to a lion, Jer 4:7; Dan 7:14; on account of the ravages made by him and his Chaldean armies.