
EZEKIEL 14: 1 Then came certain of the elders of Israel to me, and sat before me.

Here God threatens those hypocrites who pretended to worship him, while they loved and practiced idolatry, Eze 14:1-11. He declares his irreversible purpose of punishing so guilty a nation, in behalf of which no intercession of the people of God shall be of any avail. The gross idolaters of Jerusalem and Judah shall be visited with God's four sore judgments, famine, Eze 14:12-14; wild beasts, Eze 14:15, Eze 14:16; the sword, Eze 14:17, Eze 14:18; and pestilence, Eze 14:19-21. A remnant shall be delivered from the wrath coming upon the whole land, Eze 14:22, Eze 14:23.

Verse 1

Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me - These probably came to tempt him, or get him to say something that would embroil him with the government. They were bad men, as we shall see in the third verse.

EZEKIEL 14: 2 the LORD's word came to me, saying,

EZEKIEL 14: 3 Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their heart, and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them?

Verse 3

These men have set up their idols in their heart - Not only in their houses; in the streets; but they had them in their hearts. These were stumbling-blocks of iniquity; they fell over them, and broke the neck of their souls. And should God be inquired of by such miscreants as these?

EZEKIEL 14: 4 Therefore speak to them, and tell them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Every man of the house of Israel who takes his idols into his heart, and puts the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and comes to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him therein according to the multitude of his idols;

Verse 4

According to the multitude of his idols - I will treat him as an idolater, as a flagrant idolater.

EZEKIEL 14: 5 that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.

EZEKIEL 14: 6 Therefore tell the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: Return, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.

EZEKIEL 14: 7 For everyone of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who live in Israel, who separates himself from me, and takes his idols into his heart, and puts the stumbling block of his

iniquity before his face, and comes to the prophet to inquire for himself of me; I the LORD will answer him by myself:

Verse 7

And cometh to a prophet - Generally supposed to mean a false prophet.

I the Lord will answer him by myself - I shall discover to him, by my own true prophet, what shall be the fruit of his ways. So, while their false prophets were assuring them of peace and prosperity, God's prophets were predicting the calamities that afterwards fell upon them. Yet they believed the false prophets in preference to the true. Ahab, about to engage with the Syrians, who had possession of Ramoth-Gilead, asked Micaiah, the prophet of the Lord, concerning the event; who told him he should lose the battle. He then inquired of Zedekiah, a false prophet, who promised him a glorious victory. Ahab believed the latter, marched against the enemy, was routed, and slain in the battle, 1Kgs 22:10, etc.

EZEKIEL 14: 8 and I will set my face against that man, and will make him an astonishment, for a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and you shall know that I am the LORD.

EZEKIEL 14: 9 If the prophet is deceived and speak a word, I, the LORD, have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand on him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.

Verse 9

I the Lord have deceived that prophet - That is, he ran before he was sent; he willingly became the servant of Satan's illusions; and I suffered this to take place, because he and his followers refused to consult and serve me. I have often had occasion to remark that it is common in the Hebrew language to state a thing as done by the Lord which he only suffers or permits to be done; for so absolute and universal is the government of God, that the smallest occurrence cannot take place without his will or permission.

EZEKIEL 14: 10 They shall bear their iniquity: the iniquity of the prophet shall be even as the iniquity of him who seeks him;

Verse 10

The punishment of the prophet - They are both equally guilty; both have left the Lord, and both shall be equally punished.

EZEKIEL 14: 11 that the house of Israel may go no more astray from me, neither defile themselves any more with all their transgressions; but that they may be my people, and I may be their God, says the Lord GOD.

EZEKIEL 14: 12 the LORD's word came to me, saying,

EZEKIEL 14: 13 Son of man, when a land sins against me by committing a trespass, and I stretch out my hand on it, and break the staff of its bread, and send famine on it, and cut off from it man and animal;

Verse 13

By trespassing grievously - Having been frequently warned, and having refused to leave their sin, and so filled up the measure of their iniquity.

EZEKIEL 14: 14 though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, says the Lord GOD.

Verse 14

Though - Noah, Daniel, and Job - The intercession even of the holiest of men shall not avert my judgments. Noah, though a righteous man, could not by his intercession preserve the old world from being drowned. Job, though a righteous man, could not preserve his children from being killed by the fall of their house. Daniel, though a righteous man, could not prevent the captivity of his country. Daniel must have been contemporary with Ezekiel. He was taken captive in the third year of Jehoiakim, Dan 1:1. After this Jehoiakim reigned eight years, 2Kgs 23:36. And this prophecy, as appears from Eze 8:1, was uttered in the sixth year of Jehoiachin's captivity, who succeeded Jehoiakim, and reigned only three months, 2Kgs 24:6, 2Kgs 24:8. Therefore at this time Daniel had been Fourteen years in captivity. See Newcome. Even at this time he had gained much public celebrity. From this account we may infer that Job was as real a person as Noah or Daniel; and of their identity no man has pretended to doubt. When God, as above, has determined to punish a nation, no intercession shall avail. Personal holiness alone can prevent these evils; but the holiness of any man can only avail for himself.

EZEKIEL 14: 15 If I cause evil animals to pass through the land, and they ravage it, and it be made desolate, so that no man may pass through because of the animals;

EZEKIEL 14: 16 though these three men were in it, as I live, says the Lord GOD, they should deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only should be delivered, but the land should be desolate.

EZEKIEL 14: 17 Or if I bring a sword on that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off from it man and animal;

EZEKIEL 14: 18 though these three men were in it, as I live, says the Lord GOD, they should deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they only should be delivered themselves.

EZEKIEL 14: 19 Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my wrath on it in blood, to cut off from it man and animal;

EZEKIEL 14: 20 though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, says the Lord GOD, they should deliver neither son nor daughter; they should but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.

EZEKIEL 14: 21 For thus says the Lord GOD: How much more when I send my four severe judgements on Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the evil animals, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and animal!

Verse 21

My four sore judgments - Sword, war. Famine, occasioned by drought. Pestilence, epidemic diseases which sweep off a great part of the inhabitants of a land. The Noisome Beast, the multiplication of wild beasts in consequence of the general destruction of the inhabitants.

EZEKIEL 14: 22 Yet, behold, therein shall be left a remnant that shall be carried out, both sons and daughters: behold, they shall come out to you, and you shall see their way and their doings; and you shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought on Jerusalem, even concerning all that I have brought on it.

Verse 22

Behold, they shall come forth unto you - Though there shall be great desolations in the land of Judea, yet a remnant shall be left that shall come here also as captives; and their account of the abominations of the people shall prove to you with what propriety I have acted in abandoning them to such general destruction. This speech is addressed to those who were already in captivity; i.e., those who had been led to Babylon with their king Jeconiah.

EZEKIEL 14: 23 They shall comfort you, when you see their way and their doings; and you shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, says the Lord GOD.

Verse 23

Ye shall know that I have not done without cause - There is no part of the conduct of God towards man that is not dictated by the purest principles of justice, equity, and truth. He does nothing but what is right; and whatever is right to be done, that ought to be done. In God's justice there is no severity; in God's mercy there is no caprice. He alone doth all things well; for he is the Fountain of justice and mercy.