

Ezekiel 5

Ezekiel is protected, but he still has to live out the plight of his people. One thing about Christianity is that we are not allowed to be distant sympathizers. God pulls us into the story in a personal way. It is not a process that we just observe. The sin of our brothers does affect us greatly. God made us governors on earth.

“Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 18)

The book of Hebrews tells us that we must be staked with the sinners to be effective priests and advocates. Ezekiel is removed from his countrymen in Jerusalem; but now he will be subjecting himself to their condition for the public good. This is a view of how Jesus subjected himself to ridicule and discomfort to represent us.

He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. ⁴Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53)

Read Ezekiel 5:1-4: Jewish priests were instructed not to shave the edges of their beards. That sounds like they were not to emulate the Egyptian cone beard, or the long goatee, because they were emulating something evil or unnatural.

And the LORD said to Moses, “Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: ‘None shall defile himself for the dead among his people, ² except for his relatives who are nearest to him: his mother, his father, his son, his daughter, and his brother; ³ also his virgin sister who is near to him, who has had no husband, for her he may defile himself. ⁴Otherwise he shall not defile himself, being a chief man among his people, to profane himself. ⁵They shall not make any bald place on their heads, nor shall they shave the edges of their beards nor make any cuttings in their flesh. (Lev 21)



The Jews took that to mean that you just could not trim your beard at all. Regardless, it obviously shamed Ezekiel to shave off his beard. There were instances where Jews would completely shave their heads when they took a vow.

Ezekiel was a public spectacle and a living illustration of prophecy. He was figuratively carrying the burden of his people. Ezekiel was told to shave his beard. He was told to divide his shaved hair into 3 piles. He took 1/3 of his hair and burned it. Jerusalem was set on fire during the siege. He took 1/3 of his hair and hacked it up with his sword. The Babylonians would kill anyone who resisted their invasion. 2/3's of the Jews were killed from this holocaust. He took the final third of his hair clippings and threw it up into the wind and chased it around hacking it up with his sword. That would represent the future

treatment that countries around the world would unleash on the Jews. The diaspora is the scattering of Jews into the nations. People think of the Babylonian captivity, but Jews have been chased out of one country into the next for centuries. Here are just a few examples:

- 740 BC Assyria takes northern 10 tribes captive
- 586 BC Babylon takes 10,000 families and kills the rest in Jerusalem
- 476 BC Esther saves a worldwide event to kill every Jew
- 175 BC-165 BC Antiochus Epiphanes makes Jews worship Greek Gods or die
- 139 BC All Jews were expelled from Rome
- 69 BC Romans kill 12,000 Jews
- 59 BC Cicero proclaims that Jews will only be slaves
- 19 AD Tiberius expels Jews from Rome
- 38 AD Thousands of Jews killed in Alexandria, Egypt by Rome
- 66 BC Tiberius kills 50,000 Jews in Alexandria riot
- 70 AD 1,000,000 Jews are killed, and 97,000 are made slaves after the second temple was destroyed.
- 115 AD Thousands of Jews killed in unrest in Egypt
- 119 AD Hadrian makes Judaism illegal
- 132 AD 580,000 Jews killed by Cassius in the Bar Kokhba revolt.
- 259 AD The Jewish community of [Nehardea](#) is destroyed

There are hundreds and hundreds of these same kinds of things that have happened all over the world between then and now.

Ezekiel also took a pinch of hair and stiffered it behind his belt.

The 1/3 burned with fire represented the Jews who were killed during the siege. Then the 1/3 that was chopped up represented those who survived long enough to see the Babylonians scaling the wall. 2/3s of the Jerusalem Jews would not survive until the deportation. Then the last 1/3 who survived the captivity were to be chased around the world with the sword from country to country. The pinch (tiny grouping) in his belt and threw back into the fire. They were those who went crawled out of caves, repatriated Israel after the deportation, and

subsequently rebelled again, to defy God and bring death upon themselves from all kinds of sources.



God had been ultra clear about what his people needed to do. The false prophets were pronouncing the opposite. A false prophet tends to put men in the driver seat, instead of God. The Jews have been doing things their own way for a long time (just like we all do). They put their own twist on scripture; to fit their own point of view. We just can't do that. It does not work. We cannot add or subtract from scripture. Later on in history, the Jewish Mishna was 100% about putting details to scripture that God did not add. That completely messed everything up. Any time that you come out smelling like a rose, you probably misinterpreted the verses.

These things you have done, and I kept silent; You thought that I was altogether like you; But I will rebuke you, And set them in order before your eyes. (Psalm 50:21)

We all commandeer scripture into our own patterns of life in one way or another. In trying to preserve their lifestyle, they lost it all. The siege of Jerusalem was brutal and self-imposed.

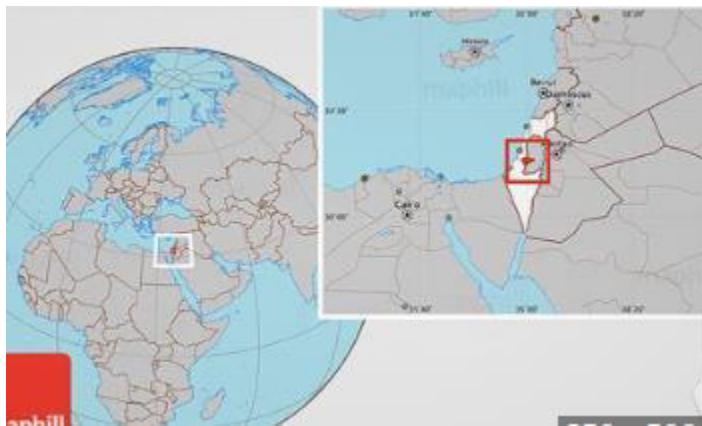
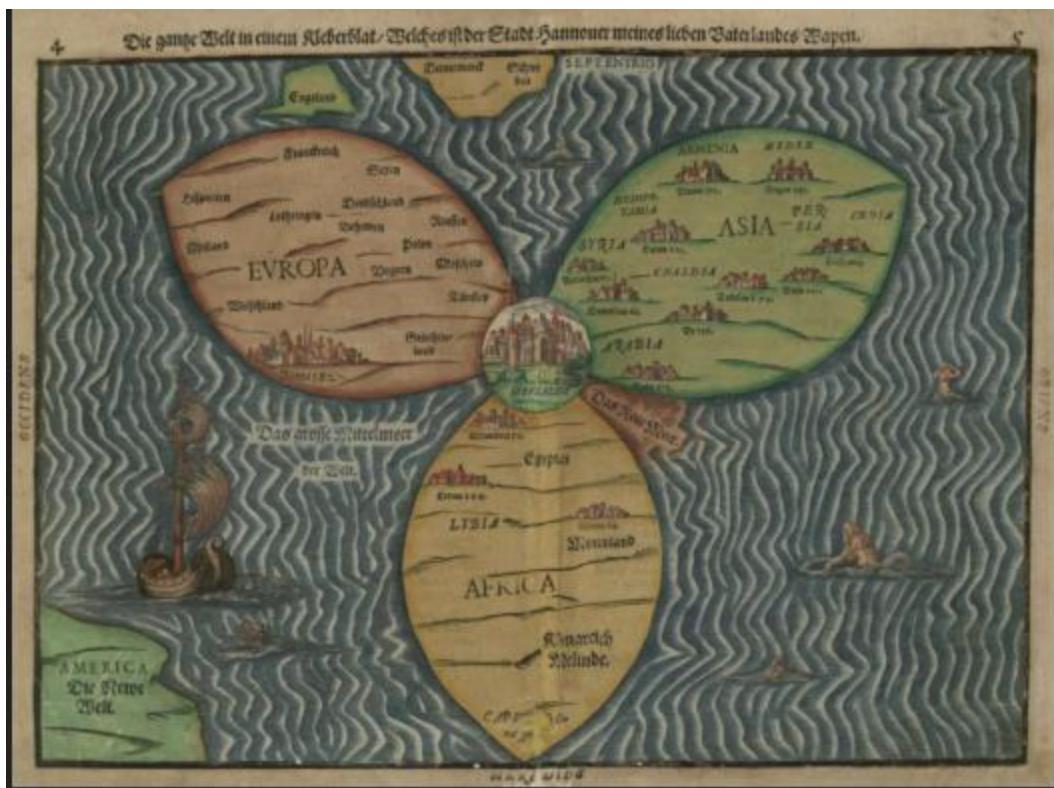
The message was not that the Jews were especially holy. They were in a time out. This was a forced national cleansing and recalibration. It was to exterminate idolatry. Even the land had to be cleansed. They needed to tune into God's channel, and do away with the false prophets. God was going to kill their idols.

Jeremiah describes the scene inside the gates of Jerusalem during the siege. The women's skin has become shriveled and dark from overexposure and malnourishment. He says the women look like jackals as they try to nurse their dying babies. Their tongues were sticking to the roof of their mouths. These mothers were abandoning their children out of self-preservation and lost hope. The wealthy women were living like street people, digging through ashes and debris.

Even the jackals present their breasts To nurse their young; But the daughter of my people is cruel, Like ostriches in the wilderness. ⁴ The tongue of the infant clings To the roof of its mouth for thirst; The young children ask for bread, But no one breaks it for them. ⁵ Those who ate delicacies Are desolate in the streets; Those who were brought up in scarlet Embrace ash heaps. (Lamentations 4)

Why was Ezekiel telling those Jews who were already in Babylon what was going to happen back home? Jeremiah 29 was sent to Babylon, telling the Jews to be good and productive citizens abroad. They were to have families and thrive. The false prophets were still among them. These false prophets were still lying about everything that God said. They previously lied about defeating Babylon, essentially causing most to the Jews to be killed in the siege. Now the false prophets in Babylon were talking about a quick return back home. Ezekiel is telling the whole Jewish population abroad to not parlay this time into a scheme to return to Jerusalem, before God tells them. They need to be more selective with their news sources.

Read Ezekiel 5:5-8: God says that he has set Jerusalem in the middle of the nations. Jerusalem has been described as the center of the nations because it is the birthplace of three faiths. God chose the Jews as his special people, among all nations.



God says that Judah acted more sinfully than the surrounding nations. That means that they were actually worse people than the Philistines, the brutal Assyrians, and the idolatrous Egyptians and Babylonians. That also means that they were worse than the utterly depraved Canaanites who they were instructed to destroy! When God's people sin, they often go off the deep end. Satan really does not need to capture a natural, unsaved man who is already a slave to his own desires. When one of God's sheep wanders off the reservation, he often finds more opportunity to sin. It is like the Pastor's kid syndrome.

'This is what the Lord GOD says to Jerusalem: "Your birth place was the territory that belonged to the Canaanites. Your father was an Ammonite and your mother was a Hittite.....⁵ Nobody pitied you to do any of these things for you, and nobody showed you any compassion. ⁹I bathed you with water, rinsed your own blood from you, and anointed you with oil. ¹⁰Then I covered you with embroidered clothing, clothed your feet with leather sandals, wrapped you with fine linen, and dressed you in silk. ¹¹I adorned you with jewels, placing bracelets on your hand and necklaces on your neck. ¹²I put a ring in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a crown encrusted with jewels on your head. ¹³You were adorned with gold, silver, clothing of fine linen, silk, and embroidery. You ate food made from the finest flour, honey, and olive oil. You were exceedingly beautiful, attaining royal status. ¹⁴Your fame spread throughout the nations because of your beauty. You were perfectly beautiful due to my splendor with which I endowed you," declares the Lord GOD. ¹⁵"But you trusted in your beauty. You did what whores do, as a result of your fame. You passed out your sexual favors to anyone who passed by, giving yourself to anyone. ¹⁶You took some of your clothes and made gaily-colored high places and prostituted yourself all around them—something which had never happened before nor will ever happen again. ¹⁷"You also took your fine jewelry—including my gold and my silver that I had given you. Then you made for yourself male images and had sex with them! ¹⁸You took your embroidered gowns and made clothes to cover them. Then you offered my olive oil and incense to them. ¹⁹"Not only that, you took the food I gave you—my fine flour, olive oil, and honey with which I fed you, and you offered them to those gods in order to appease them. That's exactly what happened," says the Lord GOD. ²⁰"Then you took your sons and daughters whom you bore for me and sacrificed them for your idols to eat. As though your prostitutions were an insignificant thing, ²¹you also slaughtered my sons and offered them to idols, incinerating them in fire ²²Throughout all of your detestable practices and immorality, you never did remember your earlier life when you were bare, naked, and wallowing in your own blood." ²³"How terrible! How terrible it will be for all of your wickedness!" declares the Lord GOD. ²⁴"You built raised mounds and high places for yourself on every plaza. ²⁵At every street corner you made your beauty abhorrent when you made yourself available for sex to anyone who was passing by. By doing this, you kept on committing more and more immorality. ²⁶Then you committed immorality with your neighbors, the Egyptians, with perverted lust, and by doing so you fornicated even more, provoking me to anger. ²⁷"Therefore, look out! I've reached out to oppose you. I withdrew your rations and delivered you to those Philistine women who hate you. Even they were embarrassed at your wicked ways! ²⁸You committed immorality with the Assyrians, because you still weren't satisfied. You committed immorality with them, but you still weren't satisfied. ²⁹You committed even more immorality with that land of the merchants, the Chaldeans. But you weren't satisfied even with these! (Ezekiel 16)

The notion that we are right, and that God must think like we do goes hand in hand with the popular messages of the false prophets. That affectively leaves God's position to somehow being off target. Believers and unbelievers both

share this kind of confusion. Even complaining about the unfairness of life is a criticism of what God has allowed.

Every way of a man is right in his own eyes (Proverbs 21)

The LORD answered Job from the windstorm and told him: ⁷ “Stand up like a man! I’ll ask you some questions, and you give me some answers! ⁸ Indeed would you annul my justice and condemn me, just so you can claim that you’re righteous? (Job 40)

The logic of men is that they see right and wrong; and that view of the world should vindicate them before an understanding God. Unfortunately, there is a circular logic problem. If a man can set up ground rules for righteousness, then live in an acceptable way, then he does not need a god because he is essentially his own god. Sadly, the popularized gods of fertility, war and prosperity and mere aspirations of men’s hearts.

Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them. (Psalm 115)

Read Ezekiel 5:9-13: There are ugly things that God has had to do to save mankind, which he has sworn not to repeat. One thing is to never flood the earth again. Here, he adds another gruesome event. The Jerusalem siege was a low point not to be repeated. Parents ate their children and children ate their parents. God will not do this exactly this way again. The Nazis starved the Jews, but they did not eat their children. They were separated from them. God clarifies that the first third burned by fire will actually be death from both diseases and starvation.

People wonder: Is God is fair or loving to allow this? You need to widen the camera view. A better question might be, as to why it took God so long to do it?

The people of Israel and Judah were ruthless and blood thirsty to their own. So much so, that Habakuk prayed that God would step in and break them of this behavior. This is a tough thing to do to a prideful mind. Many times, people have to see their own mortality to make life changes. God raised up the Babylonians just for this purpose.

O LORD, how long shall I cry, And You will not hear? Even cry out to You, “Violence!” And You will not save. ³ Why do You show me iniquity, And cause me to see trouble? For plundering and violence are before me; There is strife, and contention arises. ⁴ Therefore the law is powerless, And justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore perverse judgment proceeds. ⁵ “Look among the nations and watch— Be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days Which you would not believe, though it were told you. ⁶ For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans, A bitter and hasty nation Which marches through the breadth of the earth, To possess dwelling places that are not theirs. ⁷ They are terrible and dreadful; Their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves. (Habakuk 1)

The people ironically decided to serve Baal, the fertility god instead. The epitome of fertility and new life is eating your own children as you die yourself. God has been breaking man of his own idols since the beginning.

Read Ezekiel 5:14-17: God not only brought correction to his people, but he made them to become a cautionary tale of woe to the whole world. God made sure that the heathen nations saw what happens to someone when they disrespect the living God. The issues of life have less to do with our enemies than our walk with God.