

## Ezekiel 6

**Read Ezekiel 6:1-7:** Jeremiah focused on wickedness and injustice. Ezekiel is focusing on idolatry. This chapter begins as Ezekiel is staring out in the distance; and seeing an ominous vision of the mountains around Israel. There is a dark force that has taken hold in these highlands. God tells Ezekiel to speak to the mountains, about what is coming. There is a lot of gravity upon men as God surveys the wicked acts taking place. Ezekiel their watchman, sees destruction and holy fire coming their way. It is like an unstoppable B-1 Bomber heading for Israel. Zachariah had a similar premonition. He saw a large scroll flying towards the land. It was full of judgement for sin.

*Then I turned and raised my eyes, and saw there a flying scroll. <sup>2</sup> And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I answered, "I see a flying scroll. Its length is twenty cubits and its width ten cubits." <sup>3</sup> Then he said to me, "This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth: 'Every thief shall be expelled,' according to this side of the scroll; and, 'Every perjurer shall be expelled,' according to that side of it." <sup>4</sup> "I will send out the curse," says the LORD of hosts; "It shall enter the house of the thief And the house of the one who swears falsely by My name. It shall remain in the midst of his house And consume it, with its timber and stones." (Zachariah 5)*

Is Ezekiel speaking to nature, because man is just not listening? Is this a mountain message, or is it figurative language? Is Ezekiel actually talking in the Spirit to the mountains and the earth; and is that even possible? The earth may not be a living organism according to our definition; but it definitely responds to sin and holiness.

*And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. <sup>11</sup> So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. <sup>12</sup> When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth." (Genesis 4)*

*<sup>40</sup> But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out." (Luke 19)*

All matter responds to God.

## ***Praise to the LORD from Creation***

*148 Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights! <sup>2</sup> Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! <sup>3</sup> Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all you stars of light! <sup>4</sup> Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, And you waters above the heavens! <sup>5</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD, For He commanded and they were created. <sup>6</sup> He also established them forever and ever; He made a decree which shall not pass away. <sup>7</sup> Praise the LORD from the earth, You great sea creatures and all the depths; <sup>8</sup> Fire and hail, snow and clouds; Stormy wind, fulfilling His word; <sup>9</sup> Mountains and all hills; Fruitful trees and all cedars; <sup>10</sup> Beasts and all cattle; Creeping things and flying fowl; <sup>11</sup> Kings of the earth and all peoples; Princes and all judges of the earth; <sup>12</sup> Both young men and maidens; Old men and children. <sup>13</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD, For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and heaven. <sup>14</sup> And He has exalted the horn of His people, The praise of all His saints— Of the children of Israel, A people near to Him. Praise the LORD! (Psalm 148)*

What else do hills and mountains and high places characterize in scripture? The high elevations are compared to those who have pride and self-exaltation. Mountains are also, the places of idol shrines.

God laughs at the absurdity of our pride and distinctions between ourselves. God will humble men who exalt themselves. God hates pride.

*For You have forsaken Your people, the house of Jacob, Because they are filled with eastern ways; They are soothsayers like the Philistines, And they are pleased with the children of foreigners. <sup>7</sup> Their land is also full of silver and gold, And there is no end to their treasures; Their land is also full of horses, And there is no end to their chariots. <sup>8</sup> Their land is also full of idols; They worship the work of their own hands, That which their own fingers have made. <sup>9</sup> People bow down, And each man humbles himself; Therefore do not forgive them. <sup>10</sup> Enter into the rock, and hide in the dust, From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty. <sup>11</sup> The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, The haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, And the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. <sup>12</sup> For the day of the LORD of hosts Shall come upon everything proud and lofty, Upon everything lifted up— And it shall be brought low— <sup>13</sup> Upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, And upon all the oaks of Bashan; <sup>14</sup> Upon all the high mountains, And upon all the hills that are lifted up; <sup>15</sup> Upon every high tower, And upon every fortified wall; <sup>16</sup> Upon all the ships of Tarshish, And upon all the beautiful sloops. <sup>17</sup> The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, And*

*the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; The LORD alone will be exalted in that day, <sup>18</sup> But the idols He shall utterly abolish. (Isaiah 2)*

We do not seek God when we are feeling independent. People try to get beyond the reach of criticism. Our healthiest view of self is when we are contrite and broken from our sins.

*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart— These, O God, You will not despise. (Psalm 51)*

When Jesus returns, he will literally and figuratively knock down the high places of pridefulness, and he will lift the deep crevices and valleys of hidden sin.

*The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the LORD; MAKE straight in the desert A highway for our God. <sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth; <sup>5</sup> The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” (Isaiah 40)*

God designated as Jerusalem as the only place of acceptable corporate worship and sacrifice. Men did their own thing and took it upon themselves to worship God on mountaintops instead. People think that worshipping God their own way is cool. We believe that God will let us slide, because we are not bad. Worshipping on mountain tops doesn't seem awful; but it led into all kinds of license to *go off the reservation and invent acceptable practices*. One deviation for convenience or personal preference opens the door to all kinds of things. God made doing this a capital offense for a good reason. It immediately turned into idol worship, and orgies. The northern 10 tribes were the first ones to make up their own places and objects of worship. God has made man to worship something. They will worship themselves or an idol, if they are not worshipping God.

*He has put eternity in their hearts (Ecclesiastes 3)*

Cruelty and pride and idolatry and adultery all go together.

*Then the Lord said: “Behold, I am setting a plumb line In the midst of My people Israel; I will not pass by them anymore. <sup>9</sup> The high places of Isaac shall be desolate, And the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste. I will rise with the sword against the house of Jeroboam.” (Amos 7)*

People need to be humbled when they become deaf to the needs of others.

*<sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, <sup>21</sup> envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5)*

Before the Assyrian invasion, living among the northern 10 tribes was like being at a nonstop frat party.

*Woe to those who rise early in the morning, That they may follow intoxicating drink; Who continue until night, till wine inflames them! <sup>12</sup> The harp and the strings, The tambourine and flute, And wine are in their feasts; But they do not regard the work of the LORD, Nor consider the operation of His hands. <sup>13</sup> Therefore my people have gone into captivity, (Isaiah 5)*

When confronted with repentance, they literally went to the devil for advice.

*<sup>19</sup> And when they say to you, “Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,” should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? <sup>20</sup> To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. (Isaiah 8)*

The evil idolatrous practices were crushed in the Assyrian invasion.

*All this is for the transgression of Jacob And for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? And what are the high places of Judah? Are they not Jerusalem? (Micah 1)*

*Also the high places of Aven, the sin of Israel, Shall be destroyed. The thorn and thistle shall grow on their altars; They shall say to the mountains, “Cover us!” And to the hills, “Fall on us!” (Hosea 10)*

The way that the children of Israel treated the poor is exactly how they got treated. Likewise in Judah was taken down to the ground in the Babylonian invasion.

Like much prophecy, there can be multiple fulfillments. These judgements took place, but they also refer to the yet-future Great Tribulation, known as the time of Jacob's trouble.

*“So you shall say to them, ‘This is a nation that does not obey the voice of the LORD their God nor receive correction. Truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth. <sup>29</sup> Cut off your hair and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on the desolate heights; for the LORD has rejected and forsaken the generation of His wrath.’ <sup>30</sup> For the children of Judah have done evil in My sight,” says the LORD. “They have set their abominations in the house which is called by My name, to pollute it. <sup>31</sup> And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into My heart. <sup>32</sup> “Therefore behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “when it will no more be called Tophet, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter; for they will bury in Tophet until there is no room. <sup>33</sup> The corpses of this people will be food for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. And no one will frighten them away. <sup>34</sup> Then I will cause to cease from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. For the land shall be desolate. (Jeremiah 7)*

This evil practice of building hilltop idol shrines and the following judgements was not a one-time thing. It was condemned heavily and prophesied before. This whole scenario has happened before. It was fulfilled long before Ezekiel’s time. This kind of thing goes all the way back to the days of the judges, immediately after the re-settling of Canaan. An old prophet pointed to the wicked altars and proclaimed their utter destruction would come from a man who would be born someday named Josiah. He said the bones of these evil worshipers would be burned with fire; and their altars would be pulverized.

*And behold, a man of God went from Judah to Bethel by the word of the LORD, and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. <sup>2</sup> Then he cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD, and said, “O altar, altar! Thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men’s bones shall be burned on you.’ ” <sup>3</sup> And he gave a sign the same day, saying, “This is the sign which the LORD has spoken: Surely the altar shall split apart, and the ashes on it shall be poured out.” (1 Kings 13)*

*Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. <sup>2</sup> And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left..... Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, that he tore his clothes. <sup>12</sup> Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of*

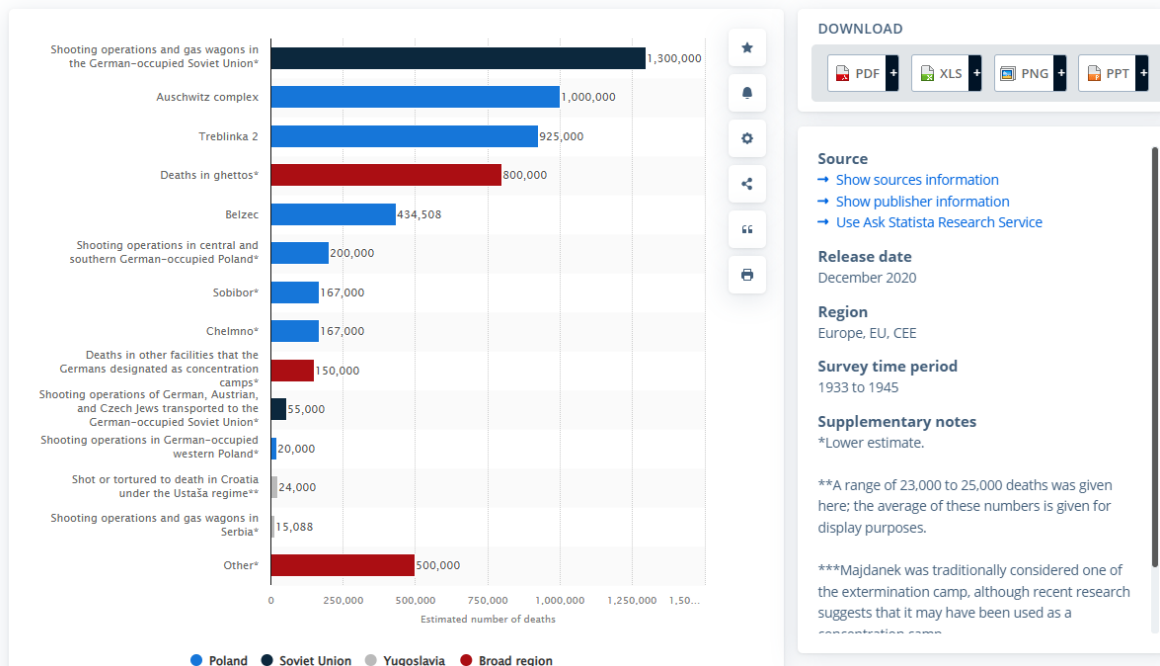
Shaphan, Achbor the son of Michaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, <sup>13</sup> “Go, inquire of the LORD for me, for the people and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great is the wrath of the LORD that is aroused against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us.” .... The king went up to the house of the LORD with all the men of Judah, and with him all the inhabitants of Jerusalem—the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant which had been found in the house of the LORD. <sup>3</sup> Then the king stood by a pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people took a stand for the covenant. <sup>4</sup> And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, the priests of the second order, and the doorkeepers, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the articles that were made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel. <sup>5</sup> Then he removed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense on the high places in the cities of Judah and in the places all around Jerusalem, and those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun, to the moon, to the constellations, and to all the host of heaven. <sup>6</sup> And he brought out the wooden image from the house of the LORD, to the Brook Kidron outside Jerusalem, burned it at the Brook Kidron and ground it to ashes, and threw its ashes on the graves of the common people. <sup>7</sup> Then he tore down the ritual booths of the perverted persons that were in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the wooden image. <sup>8</sup> And he brought all the priests from the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba; also he broke down the high places at the gates which were at the entrance of the Gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were to the left of the city gate. <sup>9</sup> Nevertheless the priests of the high places did not come up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they ate unleavened bread among their brethren. <sup>10</sup> And he defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech. <sup>11</sup> Then he removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-Melech, the officer who was in the court; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire. <sup>12</sup> The altars that were on the roof, the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, the king broke down and pulverized there, and threw their dust into the Brook Kidron. <sup>13</sup> Then the king defiled the high places that were east of Jerusalem, which were on the south of the Mount of Corruption, which Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the people of Ammon. <sup>14</sup> And he broke in pieces the sacred pillars and cut down the wooden images, and filled their

places with the bones of men. <sup>5</sup> Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down; and he burned the high place and crushed it to powder, and burned the wooden image. <sup>16</sup> As Josiah turned, he saw the tombs that were there on the mountain. And he sent and took the bones out of the tombs and burned them on the altar, and defiled it according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. <sup>17</sup> Then he said, "What gravestone is this that I see?" So the men of the city told him, "It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which you have done against the altar of Bethel." <sup>18</sup> And he said, "Let him alone; let no one move his bones." So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria. (2 Kings 22 and 23)

**Read Ezekiel 6:8-10:** God allows a very small remnant of people to see all of this carnage and escape to tell about it. The Jews have been pruned back to a small surviving group over and over and over. All of this loss of life is for nothing if nobody lives to warn the next generation. There are some sins, such as adultery and certain drugs that will literally own your mind if you give into them. Once they are established, you almost have to kill a person to make them stop. Many times that is exactly what happens. When a person exchanges God's gifts for fool's gold, they face heavy condemnation, regret, loss and separation.

The bible is full of patterns. God provides life and abundance or deliverance. Then, over time the people crawl back into bad behavior, resulting in life-threatening situations. As soon as the pressures of life subside, people revert to bad habits. The Jews have been through this so many times over history. God calls this the birth pains. Pain becomes more intense the more you let things go. The idea is that a new life (spiritual life) is supposed to accompany the birth pains. Unfortunately, it has been a lot of pains and not many re-births for Israel.

## Estimated number of Jewish deaths during the Holocaust from 1933 to 1945, by location



**Read Ezekiel 6:11-14:** God is telling Ezekiel to stomp his feet and pound his fists in frustration and intensity of anger. This is ridiculous and there is absolutely no reason to do this. God accompanies our actions and our zeal for righteousness. Our half-hearted response can result in unfinished spiritual business..

*18 “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 18:18)*

*Elisha had become sick with the illness of which he would die. Then Joash the king of Israel came down to him, and wept over his face, and said, “O my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!” 15 And Elisha said to him, “Take a bow and some arrows.” So he took himself a bow and some arrows. 16 Then he said to the king of Israel, “Put your hand on the bow.” So he put his hand on it, and Elisha put his hands on the king’s hands. 17 And he said, “Open the east window”; and he opened it. Then Elisha said, “Shoot”; and he shot. And he said, “The arrow of the LORD’s deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for you must strike the Syrians at Aphek till you have destroyed them.” 18 Then he said, “Take the arrows”; so he took them. And he said to the king of Israel, “Strike the ground”; so he struck three times, and stopped. 19 And the man of God was angry with him, and said, “You should have struck five or six times; then you would have*

*struck Syria till you had destroyed it! But now you will strike Syria only three times.” (2 Kings 13)*

God has plans to bless Israel and re-populate it. It is a real challenge, when the people refuse God over and over. There is no alternate life outside of Christ, except what God allows temporarily.