**Ezekiel Sermon #3**

**God’s Justice**

**Themes in Ezekiel:**

1. The sovereignty/glory of God. (Ezek 1:4f). God’s sovereignty demands both the destruction of Jerusalem and the salvation of God’s remnant. Theodicy.

2. The utter sinfulness of human beings. Israel sinful from birth (23:3) and worse than Sodom (16:46-48) Ezekiel 23 is so graphic it is offensive to some.

3. The inescapability (and justice) of God’s judgment. This is the main theme of Ch 1-24 Ezek 14:12-20 (esp v. 14) Even Noah, Daniel and Job could only save themselves!

Points #2,3 are virtually absent from today’s preaching. A healthy balance of grace, love, peace as well as fear, holiness and judgment are called for.

4. The return of the King and the restoration of God’s remnant to glory. Ex A few hairs tucked away 5:3 the faithful marked 9:4

**I We Need to See God**

**II We Need to Stand Up for God**

**III We Need to Eat the Scroll**

**IV We Need to Be God’s Watchman**

**Ezekiel 4 & 5 Dramatic Symbolism. God is coming in judgment, but he will save a remnant.**

**Ezekiel 8 Visions of detestable idolatry in the temple!**

Ezekiel 9 Vision of God’s judgment on Jerusalem

v. 4 “Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it.”

9:5 Kill without pity or compassion. Not that God does not have pity or compassion, but for some of us, God’s justice trumps his love for us.

9:6 Begin at my sanctuary…. Judgment, of course, begins with the elders/leaders.

**Ezekiel 10,11**

Ezekiel 10:1-4 Ezekiel sees God on his sapphire (royal blue) throne, over the cherubim, in the temple. In all this, God rules. This is one of the themes of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 10:18 The glory of the Lord departs from the temple. Very significant. As in 30AD vs 70 AD God departed the temple before he allowed the Gentiles in to defile it.

May this never happen to us!

Jerusalem is doomed.

Ezekiel 11:22-23 The end of the road. God leaves the temple.

He goes East, up the Mt. of Olives.

Jesus will reverse this foreshadow on Palm Sunday when he comes into Jerusalem.

A foreshadow of what will happen to us if we are unfaithful to God (and the nail in the coffin of Calvinism’s P in TULIP)

Note: In Ezekiel 43:1-5 After coming in judgment against the people’s sins in 586 BC, the people were restored to Jerusalem after 70 years of captivity, the temple was rebuilt and God reoccupied the temple.

This is the pattern throughout the Bible:

God’s people are in the Promised Land, they fall into sin, they are sent into captivity, but God brings a remnant back to the Promised Land.

This is the story of the whole Bible:

**I. Genesis 1 God created the universe and the earth. It was very good.**

**II. Genesis 2 God created man so that we could have an intimate relationship with him.**

**III. Genesis 3 and 4 We messed up very badly—destroying that relationship.**

**IV. Genesis 5-Rev 20 God is repairing the damage done by sin.**

**V. Rev 21-22 God has fixed the problem and we are back in a relationship with him.**

Ezekiel 9-11 begs the question:

Ezekiel 18 Is God good? Theodicy Is God a just God? Is God love? What is his justice like?

Ezek 18:1-2 The fathers eat sour grape and the children’s teeth are set on edge.

In other words, the children inherit the effect of what their parents did. They were applying this to the situation of being disciplined by Babylon. It is our father’s fault, not ours.

[There is a grain of truth to their complaint (for example 2 Kings 21:10-18) if we are talking about corporate consequences for sin, but given Ezekiel 8 & 9 this is a completely false claim.]

Ezek 18:3-4 God says no! Every person will be taken as an individual and will be accountable, before God, for what they do individually.

Much of Christianity does not agree with this doctrine. Calvinists. They believe that we guilty of the Original Sin of Adam. “In Adam’s fall, we sinned all.”

This is how they justify infant baptism, by the way.

“All souls are mine” And therefore all are predestined to salvation, if they will have it Romans 8:28-30

Ezek 18:5-18 God’s justice.

But what about Exodus 20:4? Does this contradict Exodus 20:4?

No! Both are true, and this is borne out by Ezekiel as much as any book in the Bible. The sin of one can cause the suffering of another, but not the punishment of another.

Ezek 18:5-9 A righteous man who (unrealistically) commits no sin (note the high proportion of social justice in this list… also note that in Ezekiel 16:49 the sin Sodom’s people committed were violations of social justice. “Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned: they did not help the poor and needy)

… he will surely live

Ezek 18:10-13 A son does evil the father did not do. The righteousness of his father will be irrelevant in his relationship with God.

Ezek 18:14-18 Now, the reverse case. The grandson acts as the grandfather. He will not be punished for what his father has done.

Q: Is this works salvation? Answer: No. It is a crystal clear statement that when it comes to individual relationship with God, we stand on our own.

Just in case it needs to be restated: Ezek 18:18-20 repeating Ezek 18:3 but expanding on it applying v. 5-18.

Ezek 18:21-24 The final state of our relationship with God/repentance will determine where we end up with God. (However, we should remember Hebrews 6:4-6 and 2 Peter 2:20-22).

Ezek 18:22 None of the offenses he has committed will be remembered. How encouraging!!!

Ezek 18:24 None of the righteous things he has done will be remembered. How scary a thought!!!

Ezek 18:25-29 Humans try to call God unjust in this.

Q: Does this make (human) sense? If a murderer repents and decides not to murder, do we let him off the hook? No!!!!

God: How you end up determines where you end up for eternity!

Why is God’s justice different?

1. Because, unlike man, God knows the heart.

2. Because Jesus died and was raised to solve the sin/separation problem.

Parable of the workers in the field Matthew 20:1-16 (God: “Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or envious because I am generous?” 20:15) This is God’s justice.

Ezek 18:30-32 Here is the bottom line on the issue of eternal consequences for sin.

The bottom line is this: Judah as a whole, and most of the individuals in Judah need to repent. God has no intention to get into debates with us about his justice (as evidenced by Romans 9:14-18) Our job is to repent!

I will judge you, each according to his ways, declares the Sovereign Lord. (v. 30).

God’s plea to all of us: Why will you choose to die, O house of Israel? (v. 31)

Ezek 18:32 God desires that no man be lost. God desires that all men be saved.

Our question today: Is God good? Is God just?

Answer: Yes!!! The soul who sins is the one who will die. But….

Here is our bottom line today: Repent and live!!!