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Ezekiel - Part II B - Second Vision

Introduction: Jeremiah wrote often in plain language of the pending destruction of Jerusalem, using some metaphors, while Ezekiel's writings were mostly metaphorical. However, not only do Jeremiah's writings apply literally to Judah in his day; but they can be applied allegorically to future generations, especially the last. On the other hand, Ezekiel's writings are in a similar setting as the times of Jeremiah, but apply metaphorically to the inward man, and especially to the last generation church, because it is when God finishes His work of creating. Like the parables of Jesus, only those with "ears to hear" (Lk 8:8-10) will understand them. Ezekiel 12:2: *Son of man, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house.* When you compare what Jesus said concerning this and other statements, it is clear that the church in every generation has had, and will have rebellious people. This rebellion will be dissolved in the last generation church. Chapter 9 is totally allegorical, and speaks of cleansing the heart.

Charge over the city: Ezekiel 9:1: *He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge* ⁽⁶⁴⁸⁶⁾ *over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand.* The Hebrew verb, 6486, also implies "oversight, caring for" (Num 3:32; Eze 44:11). The city over which these men have charge is Jerusalem (verse 4). When one considers what Paul wrote in Galatians 4:24-26, it can be seen that the city of Jerusalem is used allegorically of an old, as well as a new "mind-set." Jerusalem is where the national leaders of Judah reside (like Washington, D.C. in the U.S.). Old Jerusalem represents the mind-set of the rebellious in every generation. New Jerusalem, city of peace, is a symbol for the mind of Christ which we want to obtain.

Destroying weapons: It is interesting that the weapon is not named. It would be easy to hypothesize that the weapon is a sword, as the Lord God said *I will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places* (Eze 6:3), and of the three things by which the city will fall, only the sword is held in the hand (Eze 6:11). Too, many erroneously take a sword to be a symbol for the Bible, which if it is applied here, they would be placing themselves under the law. A sword, however, is a symbol for the tongue (Ps 57:4), and represents words spoken, good or bad (Eph 6:17; Rev 1:16). The Bible, or, written word, is a recorded type of what God spoke. The verse was written in a way to emphasize the inward, using the hand as a symbol, which overall represents your power, strength and works. The palm of the hand is a symbol for the heart (cp Zech 13:6; Isa 49:16), and fingers are symbols for faith (Dt 9:10; Lk 11:20). The faith by which we are saved is the spiritual understanding received from the Father through the Son, and which resides in our hearts. Understanding the Father and the Son, combined with knowledge of why we sin enables us to overcome. God's objective is to perfect us to fit His world.

Seven men: Ezekiel 9:2: 2. *And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lies toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brazen altar.* The number 6 + 1 is exposed in the description of the seven men, for a reason. First, in Part II A (pg 2, para 1) of this study, two wave offerings were discussed. Each wave offering is called first fruits, and the 144,000 are said to be *the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb* (Rev 14:4). In Part I, page 2 of this studies, it was explained that the living creatures and the great cloud were depicting a similar scene as did John in Revelation 7, of the 144,000 and great multitude.

In Ezekiel's visions, the focus is on three groups that represent human beings - living creatures, cherubim and seven men. I believe that all three relate to the same group of people - the first fruits of the Father and Son, but each gives different information about the 144,000. Keep in mind that while the symbols apply to a group, they also apply to each saint, i.e., the seven men also represent one person of the 144,000.

Secondly, the seventh man is NOT Christ, as many suppose. This is shown in the next verse: Ezekiel 9:3: *And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; Compare these two verses: John 1:18: No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. (Col 1:15) Exodus 24:9-10: 9. Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: 10. And they saw the God of Israel: ... It is Christ who calls to the man clothed in linen. Who is he, and what does he represent?*

Six represents mankind because they were created on the sixth day. The number can be divided three ways: $4 + 2$ - earthly (4) man is either separated (2) from God, or united (1+1) with God; $5 + 1$ - man is either governed by the grace (5) of the one God (1), or governed by self; $3 + 3$ - two threes, man is being completed (3) either in the fullness of Christ, or in the fullness of self, which is evil. Man plus the one God (6 + 1) will bring a person into the fullness (7) of Christ (Eph 4:13), who is in the fullness of the one God (Col 2:9). The seventh man, clothed with linen, represents how God views you, as clothed with Christ's righteousness (Rev 19:7-8), but not yet complete. Another way of describing the scene is that this man represents the spirit of Christ in all seven. The actions of the seven depict how a person develops spiritually. The glory (described in Ex 34:5-7) of the God of Israel calls from the doorway of the house (your heart), to the seven, who are standing in the court by the brazen altar in the court.

Ezekiel 9:4-7: *4. And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. 5. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: 6. Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house. 7. And he said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city.*

There are four categories of people involved - high priest, priests (24), 70 elders and the people. All were involved in the literal destruction of the city, a type of what happens in the individual mind. These categories are seen in Psalm 82, using some different words: Psalm 82:6-7: *6. I have said, Ye are gods (priests); and all of you are children (people) of the most High. 7. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes (elders).* Here is a general label for each category:

High priest: Self overall. Every person starts out ruling their own kingdom between their ears, and they are gods (or, mighty ones), i.e., making and following your own decisions and way of thinking.

Priests (24): 4×6 , or earthly man. It is the old man, or our old way of thinking contrary to God's way of perceiving things (cp Isa 55:7-8 & Eph 4:20-24).

70 elders: The foremost thoughts, or, the primary things you believe and which governs your life.

People: All the rest of the thoughts.

All the people and the elders represent thoughts accumulated via education, contact with others and influences that formulate all your thought processes, especially how you perceive God. The destruction begins with the 25 men facing east, or the worship of self. Your old man, the old way of thinking that you have no value to God, and of perceiving God as angry with you if you do not act a certain way - like, keeping the letter of the law. All thought processes have to be examined in the light of the cross. Romans 6:5: *5 For if we have been joined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be in the resurrection, (Literal translation)*

The weapons in the hands represent the spiritual understanding, or faith carried in the heart, which has been received up to this point of experience. They are told to *fill the courts with the slain*, slay the old man, that old way of thinking. The man in linen is your new man, your new way of thinking by receiving the spirit of Christ, who helps to sort out our thoughts by getting rid of the bad and retaining the good. We begin with our foremost thoughts (70 elders) and gradually work down to the root of our thoughts - *And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire (Lk 3:9)*. Before this process is finished, we become kings and priests of God (Ex 19:5-6; Rev 1:5-6).

In the New Testament Jesus declared to all the disciples and the Jews, *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you (Jn 6:53)*. Meaning - receive the understanding of His death and resurrection. Not only could the Jews not receive what Jesus said, but all of His disciples left Him, except the 12 (cp Lk 10:1 & Jn 6:66-68).

Higher gate: The seven men come by way of the higher gate (verse 2), which is the sheep-gate, outside of which the Son of God was crucified. We are instructed that, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me (Lk 9:23)*. Additionally, *knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be nullified [inactivated], so that we no longer serve sin. (Rom 6:6 - Literal translation)*. [another meaning of the Greek]

Some conclusions: God has handed down the Bible, which contains similes, proverbs, parables and historical events, used in their literal setting as well as allegorically; and altogether give many approaches toward revealing truth to those who desire to know and to live it. Keep in mind too, that these things may not be perfectly defined. Truth is progressive, and the more God gives us, the better we can evaluate past studies.

Babylon is the symbol of mankind's confusion about God: *As Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth (Jer 51:49)*. Old Jerusalem is the mind-set that is *like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt (Isa 57:20)*, and which God is restoring to New Jerusalem, the city of peace and the mind of Christ. Jeremiah 51:50-51: *51. Ye that have escaped the sword (of Babylon), go away, stand not still: remember the Lord afar off, and let Jerusalem come into your mind. 51. We are confounded, because we have heard reproach: shame hath covered our faces: for strangers (unsanctified thoughts) are come into the sanctuaries (hearts) of the Lord's house.*

Ezekiel 9:11: *And, behold, the man clothed with linen, which had the inkhorn by his side, reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me. 2 Corinthians 3:3-5: 3. (Forasmuch as ye are) manifested that ye are a letter of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in the tablets of stone, but in fleshy tablets of the heart, 4. and such trust we have through the Christ toward God, 5. not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency [is] of God, (Young) Amen!*