

The Man With The Inkhorn

Ezekiel 9

By Tom Stephens

The Situation: In reality or Physical sense, king Nebuchadnezzar's armies are invading Jerusalem and taking many captives back to Babylon (Iran); but we see what's happening *by God's Spirit* in this *9th chapter of Ezekiel*. Try to imagine the scenes by remembering what's really happening in the flesh—Jerusalem is being destroyed as God Himself is packing His bags and moving out of the Temple where He dwelt in the Most Holy Place on the Mercy Seat. This is the time we see Him moving out of the Holy place in His chariot—hovering over the *eastern gate* (indicates judgment) in grief over His people, Israel. God's Chariot was spoken of in Ezekiel's vision in Chapter one. I refer back to the New Testament to Jesus' prophetic utterance to Israel in Luke 13:34, 35:

34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! 35 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.
Luke 13:34-35 (KJV)

Jesus' prophetic statement refers to the *past* and to the *future*. God vacated the Temple in Jerusalem when Israel was taken into captivity. But Jesus promised His people, Israel, will soon say, "*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.*" At that time in the near future, all Israel will be saved.

What we see during the remainder of Ezekiel 9, is a mark placed on the foreheads of the righteous of Jerusalem by the man with the inkhorn; and the destruction of all who do not have the mark—to include women and children.

When a person reeks from the filth, senses the wrath of God, and falls on his face before the Lord in heart repentance, that's when the grace of our God might enter the picture; and only His Grace is able to cleanse and purify. But what if that wasn't true? There would be no salvation and mankind would not survive to enter into His rest and presence. But in the Old Testament, the prophets Daniel, Nehemiah, and Ezra bare the sins of the people upon their own hearts in confessions unto the Lord, leading a nation into repentance.

In Ezekiel's day the Lord looked upon the people of Judah and saw very little evidence of this spirit of self-judgment. The God of Ezekiel's time spared the cities of the plain if they had ten righteous men, but looked in vain for any appreciable group in Judea who mourned before Him because of the corruption and evil. He would separate the innocent from the apostate nation, keeping them with Himself, and judgment upon the rest. In a supernatural vision from the Lord, this was made clear to the prophet.

¹He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. ²And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth 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 brasen altar. ³And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, where 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; ⁴And 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.—Ezekiel 9, verses 1-4. KJV

A very loud voice is heard calling from the sanctuary for those who are in authority in Jerusalem to draw near with the swords of judgment in their hands.

To this call six men responded in the vision, each one armed with destructive weapons to deal with offenders against the law of God. Among these was a secretary, *or recorder*, robed in linen, *the symbol of righteousness* (as the bride of Christ), and having a writer's inkhorn by his side according to the custom of those days. These men took their positions before the brazen altar, which speaks of the cross work of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the light of which the unrepentant is to be judged.

The prophet sees the glory of the God of Israel which had gone up from its accustomed place between the cherubim over the mercy-seat, now hovering over the threshold of the house. The throne of God is no longer a throne of grace but of judgment, for grace has been ignored and God's holiness has been defied. Israel will not see Him again until she says, "*blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord*".

The voice is heard again, and is identified as that of Jehovah Himself. He commands the man clothed in linen, who had the writer's inkhorn, to go through the midst of the city of Jerusalem, and to put a permanent mark upon the *foreheads* of those who were pierced in their soul by sighing and crying over the abominations being practiced on every hand. I am reminded of the 144,000 out of all the tribes of Israel who are to be sealed in their foreheads just before the great tribulation shows its ugly face on the world in all its fury. And we thank our God today for all who have turned to Him in repentance and trusted the Lord Jesus Christ, sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked off from those who are to be Anathema Maranatha—devoted to judgment at the coming of the Lord.

The nature of the mark on the foreheads of those sealed in this vision is not indicated, but it was a certain sign that they had judged themselves before God, and now sided with Him concerning the corruptions of Judah.

"⁵And 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: ⁶Slay 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.⁷And 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."—verses 5-7.

As we read these words we cannot fail to connect them with the solemn message of 1 Peter 4 : 17, 18: "*For the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God: and if it begin first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear ?*"

The armed executors of justice were commanded to go through Jerusalem and destroy all who did not have the seal on their foreheads to include women and children, and the word was, "*Begin at My sanctuary.*" Thus the judgment began with the priest of the Lord who had profaned His name. Even so, God will deal in stern retribution with all who profess His name today but who have only a form of godliness while denying its power. The Lord will not spare the professing church if its members shun His Word and trample on His grace, turning that grace into every corruption.

Because the people of Judah had profaned the temple by their idolatries, God would *give it up to* (allow) further defilement by the dead bodies of those who had rebelled against Him.

"⁸And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem? ⁹Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The LORD hath forsaken the earth, and the LORD seeth not. ¹⁰And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head. ¹¹And, 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. —verses 8-11.

Stirred to the depths of his being by this vision of the slaughter of priests and people (so soon to be accomplished by the Chaldean [Babylon] armies), Ezekiel fell down on his face before God and pleaded that He would not destroy all the remnant of Israel when He poured out His wrath upon Jerusalem. God answered by declaring that conditions were such that judgment could no longer be delayed, and inasmuch as the whole people had departed from Him, and had refused all entreaty to repent and seek His face, judgment without mercy should be meted out to them.

But this did not mean that He had forgotten the few in the land who sighed and cried because of conditions which they could not remedy. He had commanded the destroyers already, saying, "Come not near any man upon whom is the mark." This indicated clearly His care for the faithful remnant.

As the first part of the vision came to an end the man with the inkhorn reported, saying, "I have done as Thou hast commanded me." This was to reassure the prophet concerning those who had humbled themselves before God and mourned because of the sin of Judah.

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A point for His Church to remember: Ezekiel 9 is a type of the Church Age before *and* during the Great Tribulation. How? We who are sealed with promise, as Paul teaches in Ephesians 1:13, 14, will not endure judgment, but will be raptured prior to the revealing of the antichrist. Then:

From among all who enter the Tribulation period will come *multitudes which man cannot number* who become washed in the blood of Christ, and *will be martyred*. (Rev.7:9-17).

The rest who refuse to be a part of the redeemed will be judged according to their evil works, and will be cast into outer darkness to await the Great White Throne Judgment. (Rev.9:19-20).

¹³ In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,¹⁴ Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14 - KJV)

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