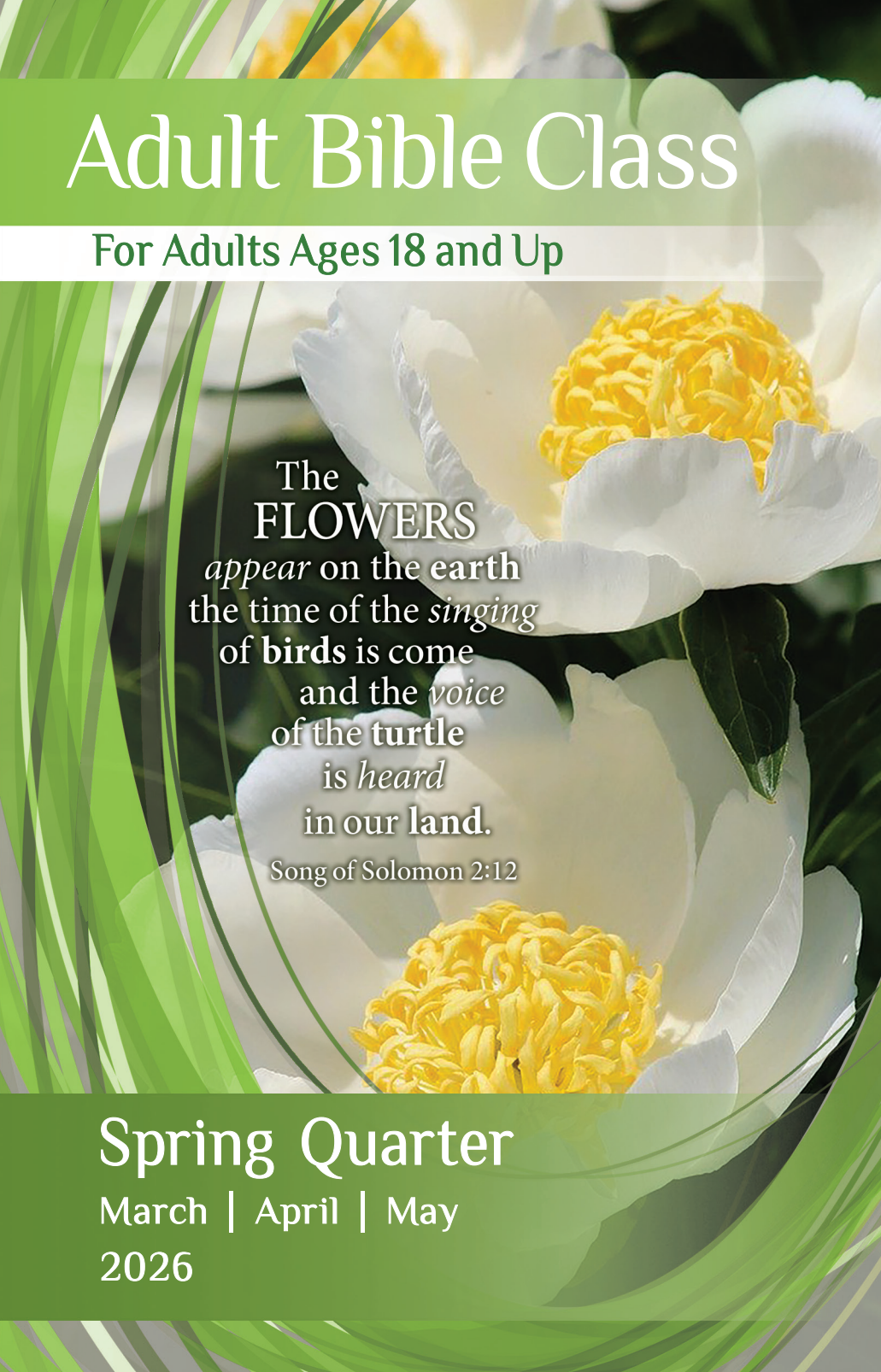




Adult Bible Class

For Adults Ages 18 and Up

The
FLOWERS
appear on the earth
the time of the *singing*
of birds is come
and the *voice*
of the turtle
is *heard*
in our land.

Song of Solomon 2:12

Spring Quarter

March | April | May

2026

Adult Bible Class

SPRING QUARTER

March, April, May 2026

God's Wrath Satisfied in Christ

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SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

EZEK. 22:17 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

18 Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver.

19 Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem.

20 As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you.

21 Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof.

22 As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the LORD have poured out my fury upon you.

23 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

24 Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation.

25 *There is* a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things;

they have made her many widows in the midst thereof.

26 Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.

27 Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain.

28 And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord God, when the LORD hath not spoken.

29 The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.

30 And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.

31 Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God.

NOTES

The Dross of Unrighteousness

Lesson Text: Ezekiel 22:17-31

Related Scriptures: Isaiah 1:21-26; 59:14-20; Malachi 3:1-5;
Matthew 25:31-46; Zephaniah 3:1-8

TIME: between 593 and 571 B.C.

PLACE: Babylon

GOLDEN TEXT—"As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you" (Ezekiel 22:22).

Lesson Exposition

JERUSALEM: THE CRUCIBLE OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

God's evaluation of His people (Ezek. 22:17-19). Over fifty times in Ezekiel, the prophet included the statement that appears in 22:17: "The word of the Lord came to me." Ezekiel had been rendered mute (cf. 3:26-27), which further emphasized that Ezekiel's message was from God. This was especially important since false prophets said Jerusalem would have peace (cf. 13:15-17).

God addressed Ezekiel as "son of man" ninety-three times. This conveyed that the prophet was a human being, a representative of God's rebellious people. God told him to listen to what He said and not rebel like the rest of the house of Israel (2:8). Ezekiel was part of the people, but he had a message from God for them.

In 586 B.C., King Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon attacked Israel and destroyed Jerusalem and other cities (cf. Jer. 34:6-7). Jerusalem, however, was special. More than just a capital, it was the city where God chose to dwell in the midst

of His people. God's temple was there, where God was present. For God to judge Jerusalem sent a message—God would not tolerate His people's sin.

When mined, silver is often not pure. This requires a process to remove impurities. Purifying silver necessitates high heat, requiring a furnace. The impure byproduct is called dross (solid impurities) or slag (molten liquid impurities). The biggest surprise to Israel was likely that God did not consider them to be the silver. The time of God's patient refining of His people was over. There was no silver among them for Him to purify. The nation had become nothing but worthless dross (Ezek. 22:18).

God's gathering of His people for judgment (Ezek. 22:20-22). Israel was God's chosen possession (Deut. 7:6-8). He loved His people, making His earthly dwelling in their midst. He often demonstrated His care by delivering them from enemies. They were meant to show God's character to the nations, but their rebellion made them unfit for the task.

Ezekiel recorded elsewhere that Jerusalem had acted more wickedly than the surrounding nations (Ezek. 5:6). Because Israel had become worthless dross, God would gather them within Jerusalem as a metalsmith gathers metal into a furnace (22:19-20). The walls of Jerusalem would become the crucible of its destruction. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon swept into the land of Israel in 588 B.C., attacking Judah's cities on his way to Jerusalem. There he laid siege until 586 B.C., when the walls were breached and the city destroyed. God would blow the fire of His wrath upon Jerusalem, just like a metalsmith blows air into a furnace (vs. 21). God was intensely angry.

The Israelites and the Egyptians learned of God's power when the Lord brought Israel out from bondage. They learned His identity when He proclaimed, "I am the Lord" (Ex. 6:7; 7:5, 17). The plagues demonstrated this was not mere talk. Through this same phrase in Ezekiel, God signaled that He oversees history and will not be disobeyed, even by His people, without consequences (Ezek. 22:22).

JERUSALEM: THE CITY OF THE GUILTY

God's message of judgment (Ezek. 22:23-24). Ezekiel told God's rebellious people why the Lord's wrath was coming. He began his third message of judgment with the same introductory statement that he used earlier (vss. 17, 23). God called Ezekiel "son of man" and then addressed Israel (vs. 24). The people were like a polluted land that needed rain to remove debris. Starting in Ezekiel 22:25, God singled out specific groups of corrupt people in Israel. He confronted the sins of the prophets, priests, princes, prophets (again), and the powerful elite of the general populace. Zephaniah had preached against the sins of Jerusalem. His message still had value. In fact, Zephaniah 3:3-4 may

form the basis for Ezekiel's descriptions in Ezekiel 22:25-29.

Judgment upon the prophets (Ezek. 22:25). God began with the prophets. They were described as lions (cf. 19:1-6), but it was not the majesty of lions to which God referred. God's accusation focused on lions as bloodthirsty killers. Rather than promoting justice, they had been self-serving. They robbed the innocent and helpless. Lives were taken, women widowed, and children orphaned.

Judgment upon the priests (Ezek. 22:26). The second group God condemned was the priests. The priests were entrusted with the sacred task of representing the people to God. The requirements for the task were well documented in the book of Leviticus. Then God gave instructions to Aaron on the importance of distinguishing between what is holy and what is common and between the clean and the unclean (10:8-10).

The priests violated the instructions. Earlier the Lord showed Ezekiel what was happening in the temple (Ezek. 8). There were all sorts of idols and idolatry not only in Jerusalem but in the temple itself as well! The priests did not stop it or instruct the people to respect God properly. The Lord was ignored in His own house! Further, the priests did not enforce keeping the Sabbaths that God had prescribed for His people. Jeremiah also warned the people of Judah that God's judgment would fall if they did not keep the Sabbath (Jer. 17:21-27).

Judgment upon the princes (Ezek. 22:27). The third group, the princes, were likely members of the extended royal family whom the king appointed to serve in towns and villages. This was a different group than the princes mentioned in Ezekiel 19:1 and 22:25. This group likely referred to officials below the higher ranking royal rulers, such as the judges. They were compared to a

pack of wolves destroying God's flock for their own personal gain (22:27).

Judgment upon the prophets (Ezek. 22:28). The fourth address was against the prophets once again. Previously, Ezekiel spent most of chapter 13 chastising false prophets who were deceiving God's people. In Ezekiel 13, God used a metaphor of whitewashing a wall to make it look sturdier than it really is. A corresponding example for us might be putting a coat of paint over a rotten board. The prophets' messages were like whitewash—the message of peace sounded great, but there was no solid foundation for their assertions.

God did not give a message of peace. God was going to judge Jerusalem. The false prophets would experience God's wrath because they presumed to speak for God, proclaiming a message that He had not given.

Judgment upon the people (Ezek. 22:29-31). The fifth group was the "people of the land." This likely refers to those who had enough influence to abuse others. This group vexed the poor for personal gain. Their targets were the poor, needy, and foreigners—the helpless ones of society. God takes a dim view of those who target the helpless, and He will not stand by and do nothing! God will arise to protect the poor and needy (Ps. 12:5), and He loves the sojourner (Deut. 10:18).

God concluded His condemnation by stating how much sin had pervaded the people (Ezek. 22:30). He used a figure of speech about a good man building the walls that would repel the Babylonian force that God was going to use to judge Jerusalem. Such a person would be righteous, one who kept God's law and worshipped God.

This was similar to God's discussion with Abraham concerning Sodom (Gen. 18:20-33). God agreed that He would spare the city if just ten righteous people were found (vs. 32). God

did not find ten righteous people in the city! Only Lot, his wife, and his two daughters escaped from the city, though his wife perished during their exodus (19:16-17, 26-28).

God placed a lower bar for Jerusalem than for Sodom and Gomorrah (Ezek. 22:30). He looked for one righteous person. He wanted to preserve His people, but they were determined to reject His every attempt to deliver them.

His people were in a worse state than Sodom when God rained fire upon it. Ezekiel stated that Jerusalem was more wicked than Samaria and Sodom (16:46-52). The Lord could not find even one person to convince Him Jerusalem should not be destroyed. Therefore, God would pour out His wrath upon them (22:31). Their punishment would correspond to their evil ways.

—Glenn Weaver

QUESTIONS

1. How did God emphasize to the Jews that Ezekiel's message came from Him?
2. Why was God's judgment against Jerusalem so important?
3. What was shocking about God refining Jerusalem?
4. What would Jerusalem's walls represent in God's plan?
5. Why is the phrase "I the Lord" significant?
6. What was God's complaint against the prophets?
7. Why was God angry with the priests?
8. How were the princes described as warranting God's judgment?
9. Why was God incensed about the actions of His prophets?
10. Why was God judging the "people of the land" (Ezek. 22:29)?

—Glenn Weaver

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. No matter what anyone else thinks of you, it is God's estimation that counts (Ezek. 22:17-18).
2. God is patient, but He will judge sin (vss. 19-21).
3. God is good but is sometimes known through discipline (vs. 22).
4. People may claim the name of the Lord but live in sin (vss. 23-24).
5. Sometimes the people who are in a position to promote God are the most sinful (vss. 25-29).
6. Even one person can make a difference (vss. 30-31).

—Glenn Weaver

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think God would use such harsh language to describe His people (Ezek. 22:17-22)?
2. What factors could lead a religious leader to take God and His Word lightly (vs. 26)?
3. What can a leader do to remain godly amid peers that seek dishonest gain (vs. 27)?
4. Why might someone deliver a prophecy that God has not given (vs. 28)? What are some parallels to this today?
5. What attitudes do we commonly find today concerning outsiders? How should Ezekiel's comments influence our attitude (vs. 29)?
6. No one is sinless. Since God was not looking for perfection, what would have persuaded Him not to destroy Jerusalem (vss. 30-31)?
7. How can we "stand in the gap" for our Lord today?

—Glenn Weaver

Golden Text Illuminated

"As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you" (Ezekiel 22:22).

Our golden text envisions Jerusalem enveloped in God's refining fire, as metal melted in a crucible to remove impurities. Though God's purifying fire may seem harsh, this imagery conveys the Lord's purpose in leading us through adversities is to refine, purify, and restore us. As metal yields to the blacksmith's hammer, trials mold and shape us into useful vessels for the Master's use.

Paul declared, "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope" (Rom. 5:3-4). Many saints have walked through adversity with their faith undimmed, emerging on the other side like gold purified and refined.

We must remember in the furnace that only the divine Refiner can clearly see the Christlike potential that trials reveal. We must trust His guiding hand through the fiery trial, surrendering to the process even when the heat of the flames seems unbearable in the moment. We must yield to the Lord's purifying work in our lives, allowing Him to burn away all dross and impurities to bring forth His restored image in us, refining and polishing us into radiant vessels of His glory. He promises to sustain us through every trial and bring us forth from the furnace reflecting the likeness of Christ, as refined gold. We can rest in Him, who willingly bore the furious heat of God's judgment for our sins in our place, sparing us from its fullest fury.

—Gene Kissingner