

HOME STUDY



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

Home Study

SPRING QUARTER

March, April, May 2026

God's Wrath Satisfied in Christ

UNIT 1: God's Wrath on Sin

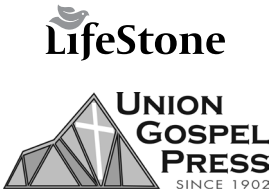
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SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

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

Over the next two lessons, we will be focusing on passages from the book of Ezekiel. The prophet Ezekiel was among the first group of exiles taken from the southern kingdom of Judah to Babylon in 597 B.C. He received his first vision of the glorious Lord on His chariot-throne in about 593 B.C. (Ezek. 1:1).

In addition to being a prophet, Ezekiel was also a Levitical priest (1:3). His priestly background is apparent throughout the book, specifically through his concern for the holiness and cleanness of the people (22:26; 44:23). The book of Leviticus makes clear that only holy (set apart, consecrated for special service) and clean (pure) objects, animals, and people are acceptable to stand in God's presence (10:10-11; 11:47; 20:25). Anything less than perfection will perish in the fire of His holy wrath.

The prophet used the metaphor of a fiery furnace melting away the "dross" (impurities) from God's people. In order to understand the passage, it is essential to identify exactly who or what are the various components to which the

metaphor refers. First, the smith who is operating the furnace is the Lord (22:19-22). Second, the furnace itself is the city of Jerusalem (vs. 19). Third, and crucially, the "dross" that was being melted away was *not* the impurities within individual Judahites (although that is discussed in other places [cf. Isa. 1:22, 25; Mal. 3:2-4]), but rather the inhabitants of Jerusalem themselves (Ezek. 22:18-19), who are to be cleared away so that the "pure metal" of what is elsewhere called the "remnant" will remain in the land (cf. Isa. 6:13; 10:20-23; 11:10-11).

On the surface, understanding Ezekiel 22:17-31 probably appears to be difficult; knowing now that the passage speaks about the clearing away of people through military conquest and widespread death, it becomes even more so. Furthermore, does it not contradict what has been said above about the Lord removing the dross of sin from *within* His people so that they may be *individually* purified (cf. Isa. 1:22, 25; Mal. 3:2-4)? Further study can clarify the meaning.

THE FURNACE OF GOD'S WRATH— Ezek. 22:17-22

God spoke to Ezekiel (Ezek. 22:17-18). The Lord entrusted a message to Ezekiel, whom He addressed as “son of man (Adam)” (vs. 18; cf. vs. 24). That is a name the Lord called Ezekiel throughout the book, and its meaning appears to be simply a person, a descendant of Adam. By using that title, God emphasized Ezekiel's role as a representative of His people Israel, and all humanity.

Jerusalem became like dross (Ezek. 22:18-19). What, then, did God say to that “son of man”? God's message in Ezekiel 22:18-22 was that the inhabitants of Jerusalem had become like “dross” (vss. 18-19) which He, the great Smith, would melt out in the furnace of Jerusalem (vs. 19). The difficulty with God's destruction was not merely of sin within individual people, but within the people themselves (vss. cf. Jer. 6:27-29). We must remember Ezekiel's situation: he was part of the first wave of exiles to Babylon, but Jerusalem itself was not destroyed until roughly ten or eleven years later (586 B.C.). Thus, Ezekiel and the first group of exiles to Babylon were waiting anxiously to hear news about Jerusalem from their kinfolk who were still there (cf. Ezek. 33:21-22).

God would remove the dross (Ezek. 22:20-22). In other words, the outpouring of the Lord's wrath is a reference to a particular historical event: the destruction of Jerusalem, not as a general rule of how the Lord deals with all people at all times. While the Bible is clear that there will be a final judgment, from which no individual human will be able to turn back (Matt. 25:31-46; Rom. 2:6-11; Rev. 20:11-15), the consistent pattern is that His judgment occurred only after a long period in which He patiently called His people to repent and continually extended mercy to them in the meantime (cf. Isa. 65:1-16;

Rom. 10:20-21). The exiles in Babylon were not to hope for any more mercy for Jerusalem; the time for purging had finally come. When they heard the news of Jerusalem's fall, they would know that the Lord, the covenant-keeping God who requires His people's obedience (cf. Ex. 34:6-7), was behind it (Ezek. 22:22).

THE UNREPENTANT CITY— Ezek. 22:23-31

The land was not clean (Ezek. 22:23-24). The main question this second section answers is why such judgment upon Jerusalem was necessary in the first place. The Lord again appeared to Ezekiel (vs. 23), directing him to speak a prophecy of judgment over the Promised Land because it was “not cleansed” (unclean, impure). The specific judgment of the land not being “rained upon” in the second half of verse 24 is a reference to Deuteronomy 28, where Moses pronounced a lengthy list of curses that the Lord would bring on the land and its people for their disobedience (vss. 23-24; cf. 1 Kgs. 8:35-36). Lack of rain is devastating for agricultural societies.

The prophets were corrupt (Ezek. 22:25). Ezekiel 22:25-28 identifies the source of Jerusalem's impurity: its leadership. The three major types of leaders in ancient Israel were prophets (vss. 25, 28), priests (vs. 26), and those who held positions within the monarchy (“princes,” vs. 27). Interestingly, this lesson text is bookended by the offenses of the false prophets (vss. 25, 28) in contrast to Ezekiel, a true prophet. They are pictured as conspirators (vs. 25; cf. Isa. 8:12, 19) who manipulate the weak through their false prophecies. Specifically, they seemed to have had a hand in causing the deaths of innocent men; like prowling lions who destroy precious human lives (the word “soul” is synonymous here with a human “life”

and is not merely a reference to the immaterial soul). They devoured husbands and thus multiplied the number of widows (Ezek. 22:25).

The priests were corrupt (Ezek. 22:26). Similarly, instead of teaching laypeople God's law, especially how it distinguishes between "holy" and "profane," "unclean" and "clean," Judah's priests presumptuously led the people into mixing up those categories (vs. 26). That was especially manifested in their refusal to distinguish between the Lord's holy Sabbath Day (cf. Ex. 20:8) and the other (common) six days of the work week. The eventual result of their not following God's commands about holiness and commonness was that they showed contempt for God Himself, considering Him "profane" (common) as well (Ezek. 22:26).

The princes were corrupt (Ezek. 22:27). Finally, verse 27 describes Judah's "princes" (government leaders) as "wolves" who, like the lion-like prophets (vs. 25), also used their positions to devour innocent people. Human lives ("souls") were disposable in their quest to make a profit.

The prophets were corrupt (Ezek. 22:28). Verse 28 returns to the prophets, who colluded with the corrupt government officials by telling them exactly what they wanted to hear. "Untempered mortar" is also known as "whitewash," which was used to cover up visible imperfections on walls or other structures (cf. 13:8-16; Matt. 23:27-28). The true prophet's job was to call corrupt kings and other government officials to account in the name of the Lord, even if it meant risking their lives (cf. Neh. 1). Instead, those false prophets associated the Lord's name with words of false comfort (cf. Ex. 20:7).

The people were corrupt (Ezek. 22:29). The collective result of the corrupt leadership was that all the people

modeled their oppressive behavior. Their "oppression" and "robbery" exploited the classes of people whom the Lord Himself has vowed to protect: the "poor," the "needy," and the "stranger" (resident alien, sojourner, immigrant [cf. Ex. 22:21-27; 23:9]).

A worthy intercessor could not be found (Ezek. 22:30-31). Ezekiel 22:30-31 end the lesson text with the sad picture of the Lord searching Jerusalem (cf. Zeph. 1:12) for someone to intercede (pray for, "stand in the gap" for) His people, but He found no one (Ezek. 22:30). The Lord Himself would have to do it (cf. Isa. 59:16-21; Rom. 11:26-27). In the meantime, God's wrath must be poured out (Ezek. 22:31).

—Blake Henriques

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. Like Ezekiel, we are "sons (children) of man (Adam)" (Ezek. 22:17-18; Rom. 5:12-21).
2. Impure things and people become pure when God purges them of their impurities (Ezek. 22:18-22).
3. Having our sin purged is painful (vss. 18-22)!
4. Even God's city, Jerusalem, had to be purged of its sin (vs. 19).
5. God's wrath was poured out so that Israel might recognize their violation of God's covenant (vs. 22).
6. God especially condemns the sin of bad leaders who use their power to lead those in their charge to sin (vss. 23-29).
7. Jesus stood in the gap, taking God's wrath for us (vs. 30).
8. God's judgment is commensurate with human actions (vs. 31; cf. Rom. 2:1-11).

—Blake Henriques

FOR DAILY MEDITATION

MONDAY, Feb. 23. Isa. 1:21-26.

The unrighteous city. Usually associated with molten metal, dross is a worthless by-product of something precious, such as silver. When the prophet refers to life in Jerusalem as dross, that is a truthful assessment of a city that prided itself in being the City of God but had gone astray from the Lord's commandments. Isaiah calls followers of the Lord to assess their own lives in light of the Scriptures. Like Israel, we can easily be blinded by our unrighteousness.

TUESDAY, Feb. 24. Zeph. 3:1-8.

Final judgment coming. The apostle Peter wrote, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begins at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Pet. 4:17). Zephaniah gave the same warning to God's people. Judgment is coming, and God's people will not be exempt; however, the Lord will be merciful to those who repent and return to following His ways.

WEDNESDAY, Feb. 25. Mal. 3:1-5.

Like a refiner's fire. There can be a lot of pain in the healing process. Ask anyone who has had a joint replacement, severe burns, or a rupture in a relationship. The refiner's fire is designed to purify metal by intense heat. God's holy fire will purify those who follow Him, but it will not be without pain. There is much impurity in our lives, and the Lord desires to remove it.

THURSDAY, Feb. 26.

Matt. 23:13-14, 23-33.

Unrighteous teachers. Cemeteries are often beautiful places. Lovely headstones dot a tree-filled landscape, yet, underneath are dirt and bones. Jesus rebuked the religious leaders for their

focus on how they looked on the outside to others. He knew what was inside them (John 2:25). What He saw was the dirt and bones of hypocrisy. Teachers have a special responsibility to be examples inside and out of what it means to follow the Lord.

FRIDAY, Feb. 27.

Matt. 25:31-46.

Gathering for judgment. What is stunning about this story of judgment is the ignorance of both groups. Neither was aware of the significance of their deeds or lack of them. The "sheep" were going about their daily lives caring for the needs of people. The "goats" were going about their lives taking care of themselves with little notice of others. The danger of this life is the eternally unimportant distractions at the cost of focusing on those deeds that have eternal value.

SATURDAY, February 28.

Ps. 119:113-120.

Hope in the Lord. When evildoers surround us, we might feel trapped and alone. However, the psalmist demonstrates a way through—hope in the Lord. We can find hope by trusting His Word, His protection, and His faithfulness. In an evil world, we can often feel isolated because of our faith in God. Yet, we are not. The Lord promises that He will never leave us or forsake us (Heb. 13:5).

SUNDAY, March 1. Ezek. 22:17-31.

God pours out wrath. Many times in the Old Testament, the description (or something similar) of God is used: "The Lord is gracious and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy" (Ps. 145:8; cf. Neh. 9:17; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2). For the Lord, judgment never comes quickly or without demonstrated reason. While God will not withhold it forever for the unrepentant, we can be assured of God's patience and mercy with us if we repent.

—Jim Musser