

A photograph of a pink lotus flower in full bloom, floating on a dark blue pond. Several green lily pads are visible in the background, and tall green reeds are on the left side of the frame. The scene is captured in a soft, natural light.

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

SUNDAY
SCHOOL *Superintendent*

Spring Quarter | March | April | May 2026

Sunday School Superintendent

SPRING QUARTER

March, April, May 2026

Editorial	2
God's Wrath Satisfied in Christ	
UNIT 1: God's Wrath on Sin	
Mar. 1—The Dross of Unrighteousness—Ezek. 22:17-31.....	4
Mar. 8—The Way of the Lord Is Just—Ezek. 33:12-20.....	6
Mar. 15—God's Wrath Revealed—Rom. 1:18-23	8
UNIT 2: God's Wrath Poured Out	
Mar. 22—Jesus Prepares for Death—Mark 14:32-52	10
Mar. 29—Jesus Bears God's Wrath—Mark 15:16-39.....	12
Apr. 5—Jesus Overcomes the Grave (Easter)—Mark 16:1-8.....	14
Apr. 12—The Destruction of False Teachers—2 Pet. 2:1-10a.....	16
Apr. 19—The Deception of False Teachers—2 Pet. 2:10b-22	18
UNIT 3: God's Wrath Satisfied	
Apr. 26—God's Righteous Judgment—Rom. 2:1-16.....	20
May 3—Righteousness through Faith—Rom. 3:21-31.....	22
May 10—Saved from Wrath—Rom. 5:1-11.....	24
May 17—The Second Adam—Rom. 5:12-21	26
May 24—The End of the Law—Rom. 10:1-13	28
May 31—Christ's Sacrifice Once for All—Heb. 10:1-10.....	30
Paragraphs on Places and People	32



Editor in Chief: James M. Leonard, Ph.D.
Managing Editor: Michelle Birtasevic
Writer: Matthew Swale
Edited and published quarterly by
LIFESTONE MINISTRIES
UNION GOSPEL PRESS
Rev. W. B. Musselman, Founder

ISBN 978-1-64495-845-2

This material is part of the "Christian Life Series," copyright © 2026 by Union Gospel Press, part of the LifeStone Ministries family. All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without written permission from Union Gospel Press, except as permitted by United States copyright law. Edited and published quarterly by LifeStone Ministries, Union Gospel Press. Mailing address: P.O. Box 301055, Cleveland, Ohio 44130-0915. Phone: 800-638-9988. www.uniongospelpress.com

Editorials

BY MATTHEW SWALE

An Unpopular Topic

This quarter's concepts are unpopular nowadays. The present culture does not tolerate the biblical concept of God's wrath. For example, a young woman once led a Bible study on Romans on a secular university campus. Taking one chapter per week, the content on wrath in Romans 1 and judgment in Romans 2 resulted in no one coming back to study chapter 3! That was a shame, because the death of Christ in Romans 3 makes no sense if God is only a cheerleader of human endeavors. The declaration of God's anger toward sin in Romans 1 led one participant to say that the God she believes in would never be angry. Hers was not the God of the Bible, the God of Ezekiel, the God of the Gospels, or the God of the Pauline Epistles.

The flow of thought this quarter begins with God's justice and wrath toward human sin in lessons 1-3. Lessons 1-3 explain the contents of the cup of God's wrath that Jesus reflects on and drinks down to the dregs in lessons 4-6. Lessons 7-8 reflect on false teaching that, in New Testament times and today, would seek to convince people that sin is no big deal. This was a denial of the very logic of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, that costly price paid by God because of the horror of sin. Lessons 9-13 follow the logic of the gospel in Romans.

God's just judgment on *all* people, religious and irreligious, clarifies the nature of Christ's sacrifice. The death of Christ was a costly and drastic response to human sin because human sin is as deep and old as the Garden of Eden. Lesson 14 takes a broad view of both the life *and* death of Christ and the enduring, eternal solution to sin that it provides.

Many of this quarter's texts deal with God's wrath and judgment. The world's aversion to these biblical concepts is mentioned above, but frankly, many Christians do not enjoy reading biblical passages on these topics either. There are those who associate wrath and judgment with the Old Testament and merciful love with the New Testament.

Three considerations challenge this notion. First, the New Testament texts in lessons 3, 4, 5, and 7-11 should be sufficient to demonstrate that God's just stance on sin has not changed in the New Testament. Second, Old Testament texts like Exodus 34:6-7, Jonah, and Psalm 145 can help Bible readers see the thoroughgoing grace of God on display in the Old Testament. Third, although God does not change between the Old and New Testaments, He interacts with His people differently in the old covenant and the new covenant. Judgment and discipline on sin was more immediate and physical in the old cov-

PLEASE NOTE: Fundamental, sound doctrine is the objective of LifeStone Ministries, Union Gospel Press. The writers are prayerfully selected for their Bible knowledge and willingness to submit to the Spirit of Truth, each writing in his own style as enlightened by the Holy Spirit. At best we know in part only. "They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).



enant because of God's arrangement with Israel explained in Deuteronomy 28. The prophets often preached with Deuteronomy 28 in the background of their judgment-talk. In the new covenant, judgment is still present as seen in two primary locations: the cross and the Day of the Lord. It is substitutionary judgment at the cross, or delayed judgment until both hell and the fiercest book in the Bible: Revelation.

Judgment and wrath passages in both Testaments are good for Christians to read for at least the following six reasons. First, they correct the lopsided view of God as loving but not just. Second, they increase believers' appreciation for what they have been saved *from* in Christ. Third, they motivate Christians to witness to those who will experience God's wrath unless they turn to Christ. Fourth, they teach Christians to love what God loves and hate what He hates. Fifth, they provide an answer to those who wonder why God does not punish the wickedness and injustice in the world. And last, they can cultivate hope by providing

a glimpse of the final justice Jesus will bring at His return.

However, the purpose of studying God's wrath this quarter is not merely to reflect on God's judgment. It is to emphasize that God's wrath has been satisfied in Christ. If we only announce that God judges sin, we have ultimately failed to declare the Christian message. Make sure that after your teachers have emphasized the problem, they share God's glorious solution with their classes.

The second unit emphasizes that God's wrath was poured out on Christ, and the third unit rejoices in this glorious reality. We are saved entirely by grace through faith in Christ. Because Christ has fully borne the wrath of God, we do not have to. Through our identification with Him (or "in" Him, as the New Testament sometimes puts it), we are delivered. As in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive (cf. 1 Cor. 15:22)!

Jesus' once-for-all sacrifice (lesson 14) has no lack. We do not need to add anything to it. No amount of good works, giving, or religious rites are required. We can be confident that if we have faith in Christ, His blood completely covers us. While it is true that true faith will always result in works, that is not the emphasis of this quarter. While it might be appropriate for teachers to occasionally call their classes to examine the genuineness of their faith this quarter, that should not be the focus. Instead of focusing on our own works, we should focus on Christ, what He has done, and what He has accomplished.

This quarter, we hope that you can help your teachers proclaim the good news. We must not shirk from declaring the bad news of God's wrath against sin and our terrible predicament apart from Christ, but never stop there! Because God's wrath has been satisfied in Christ, we can live joyful, thankful, and obedient lives!

The Dross of Unrighteousness

Lesson Text: Ezekiel 22:17-31

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).

OPENING MOMENTS

Suggested Song (Adults)

"Trust and Obey" (Sammis)

Suggested Song (Children)

"Trust and Obey" (Sammis)

Icebreaker

How have you seen leaders, by example or by position, keep others from making destructive choices? How have you seen the opposite?

LESSON OUTLINE

1. Jerusalem would be refined by judgment (Ezek. 22:17-22)
2. Jerusalem's leaders would be judged (Ezek. 22:23-31)

KEY ISSUES

Ezekiel's prophetic ministry spanned 593-571 B.C., all while living outside of his homeland—Judah—in Babylon. He was deported by the Babylonian army in 597 B.C., so he prophesied about the destruction of Jerusalem while living in Babylon (Ezek. 1:1). Jerusalem was not destroyed, however, until about 587 B.C. This gap in both time and space typifies the strangeness of Ezekiel's ministry.

Ezekiel comprises three large sections. Today's text occurs in the first section, Ezekiel 1-24, which addresses deported people from Judah, con-

vinced their time in Babylon would be short-lived because God would *never* destroy beloved Jerusalem (cf. 13:16). The following section, chapters 25-32, contains Ezekiel's messages about the destruction of nations that opposed the Lord and His people. The book concludes with chapters 33-48, addressing people who received word that the Lord had judged Jerusalem through its fiery destruction, just as Ezekiel had said (33:21). In today's text, the Lord explains the purpose of the oncoming judgment (refinement) and the causes of judgment (covenant unfaithfulness among Judah's leaders), themes integral to the book as a whole. Even today, God's people may experience painful discipline (Heb. 12:11). However, this is not for the final purpose of destruction but in order to refine His people.

SON OF MAN

Ninety-three times in the book of Ezekiel, God called Ezekiel "son of man," reminding the prophet that he was from the same stock as those he represented. The phrase similarly recurs in Daniel (cf. 8:17) and also refers to the coming messianic Ruler (cf. 7:13-14). It is the most common title for Jesus in the

Gospels because of His complete yet sinless humanity and His eternal reign (Mark 14:62).

Ezekiel 22:17-22 presents the purpose of Jerusalem's destruction in a way that is simultaneously foreboding and hopeful. The fire imagery implies three realities. First, the Lord's anger burned against Judah's covenant-breaking ways (cf. 2 Kgs. 23:26). Second, Jerusalem would literally burn at the hands of the Babylonian army (cf. 25:9). Third, fire would remove the dross of covenant-breaking from Judah. Isaiah used the same imagery to explain how judgment (Isa. 1:24-25) would remove the dross of unfaithful Jerusalem (vss. 21-22) to become a purified, righteous city (vss. 26-27).

Next, in Ezekiel 22:23-31, the Lord explained how Judah's prophets, priests, and princes had invited God's judgment. He focused on the leaders not because the general populace in Judah was innocent of covenant-breaking (cf. 22:29; 18:1-4) but because their sin had led others astray and blocked the God-ordained means for spiritual repair. Ezekiel's focus on leaders is like James's statement about "greater" judgment on teachers (Jas. 3:1-2).

The Lord judged Judah's leaders for their sinfulness (Ezek. 22:25-27). In verse 26, God singled out priests because they had not "shewed," or caused to be known, the truth of God's word. This contrasted with God's actions throughout Ezekiel, which consistently caused Judah to "know" that He is the Lord (cf. 5:13; 24:27). In today's text, God caused Judah to know the Lord as Judge (22:22). This paved the way for Judah later to know the Lord as Redeemer (34:27). The Lord's judgment would reverse their spiritual ignorance.

The leaders were also called out for what they had left undone (22:30). These leaders should have stood "in the gap" to avert God's judgment (vss. 30-31). Psalm 106 explains how Moses as prophet (vs. 23) and Phinehas as priest (vs. 30) stood in the gap through prayer and disciplinary action to avert God's judgment on Israel. Today, we are urged to pray for others (cf. 1 Tim. 2:1; Eph. 6:18). As we bring others before the throne of grace, we can make a difference in the lives of people even if they live across the globe.

"Princes" (Ezek. 22:27) sometimes refers to governing authorities (cf. 1 Kgs. 20:19) who could use their office to promote covenant faithfulness among the people. Instead, they used the people, and so Jerusalem would fall. But one day Someone would repair the gap (Amos 9:11). He would be the perfect Prophet (John 4:19), Priest (Heb. 7:23-26), and Prince (Isa. 9:7), the Lord Jesus Christ.

BRINGING IT HOME

The song for this lesson, "Trust and Obey," provides a good template for responding to this text. Repentance and faith in Christ averts fiery judgment. Even when believers experience God's fatherly discipline, they look to Jesus for strength (Heb. 12:1-11). Then, fueled by Christ's grace, readers of this text should ask whether they care for the widows (Ezek. 22:25), the poor (vs. 29), and the immigrants in their community.

All Christians, regardless of leadership positions, should consider whether they say, "Thus saith the Lord God, when the Lord hath not spoken" (vs. 28) and thus misrepresent God's Word. The prophets show the judgment Christ took for believers, as well as the qualities of a life refined by God's judgment.