



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

SENIOR HIGH BIBLE TEACHER

FOR TEACHERS OF TEENS AGES 15-17

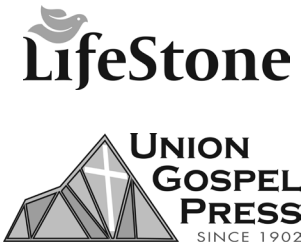
SPRING QUARTER | MARCH | APRIL | MAY 2026

Senior High Bible Teacher

SPRING QUARTER

March, April, May 2026

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The Weeks Ahead

The wrath of God is His righteous response to people's sin. People reject and replace God, turning from His perfect plan for them to idolize self or other things and to destroy His creation. God responds by handing them over to their chosen path, revealing to them the consequences of their sin, and eventually justly punishing them.

In lessons 1 through 3, we see God's wrath toward sin. Lessons 1 and 2 from Ezekiel show how the Israelites deserved God's wrath because of their idolatry and bloodshed. God expressed His wrath by removing His hand of protection from His people, allowing the Babylonian Empire to come and destroy Jerusalem and the temple. Lesson 3 outlines the history of creation and human depravity, in which all people throughout the ages have chosen to worship wrongly. God allows them to experience the full consequences of their destructive paths.

Lessons 4 through 8 demonstrate God's wrath as it is poured out, first on Jesus at the cross and then on unrepentant sinners at the final judgment. We see in lesson 4 Jesus' prayer in the garden and His acknowledgment of the cup of God's wrath that He would soon drink. In lesson 5, Jesus experiences intense agony and suffering as He fully identifies with humanity in its separation from God the Father. He atones for sins by dying as a substitute for sinners. On Easter, we will read the beautiful resurrection account and see Jesus' triumph over sin and death in lesson 6. For those who trust in Jesus' sacrifice on their behalf, God's wrath is thus poured out and finished. However, for those who do not submit

to Jesus' Lordship, lessons 7 and 8 make clear that God's wrath upon their sin remains in effect. It will be stored until the final judgment, when unrepentant sinners will experience the consequences of their sin.

Lessons 9 through 14 explain how God's wrath was satisfied by Jesus. Paul walks through the gospel message clearly in his letter to the Romans, so we will look at his theological account for clarity on this important topic. Lesson 9 demonstrates the link between God's wrath and His righteous judgment in Romans 2. Lesson 10 teaches the bad news of universal sin, but also the good news of the universal offer of forgiveness through faith in Romans 3. Lessons 11 and 12 clarify Paul's argument in Romans 5 that we are completely saved from wrath through our relationship with Jesus, and that His gift of grace reigns far above Adam's kingdom of sin and death from which Jesus rescued us.

Lesson 13 focuses on Romans 10, where Paul shows how Jesus perfectly fulfilled the law, demonstrating that it had been pointing toward our need for Him all along. Finally, lesson 14 moves to Hebrews, where the author cites Psalm 40 to show how Jesus obediently sacrificed His body as the once-and-for-all payment for sins.

Throughout our study, we will see that God remains just, righteous, and holy. Despite humanity's consistent sin, God loved people enough to send His Son to provide a way of salvation from the punishment we deserve. Because Jesus rescued us, we can live abundant lives on earth and experience eternity with God.

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).

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).

Studying the Text

Ezekiel lived around 600 B.C. in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, just before and during the Babylonian Exile. He came from a priestly family (Ezek. 1:2), but since he was taken into exile, he may not have been able to serve as a priest in Jerusalem (Num. 8:24-26). After the reign of King Josiah, the Babylonians attacked Jerusalem, and although they did not destroy the city or the temple (yet), they took many people, including Ezekiel, into exile in Babylon (2 Kgs. 24:8-17; Ezek. 1:1-2).

In Babylon, God sent visions to Ezekiel and called him to speak to the exiles and the surrounding Babylonians. Unfortunately, those in exile did not listen to his warnings or calls for repentance, as God had told him would be the case from the beginning (Ezek. 3:7). Ezekiel's first vision showed that the Lord's glorious presence had left the temple in Jerusalem because of the rebellion and idolatry of the people in Judah (chaps. 1—11). He acted out warnings for the people (chaps. 4—5), prophesying God's judgment on Israel (chaps. 12—24), judgment

on the nations around Israel (chaps. 25—32), and judgment on Jerusalem itself (chap. 33). Still, hope remained for Israel because God promised to preserve a remnant, and His power can change hearts and bring dry bones to life (chaps. 36—37).

Ezekiel prophesied that God's presence would return to His people as the coming Messianic king rebuilt a new temple to the Lord. God would restore His holy people by gathering them to His Garden-of-Eden-like presence (chaps. 40—48). Within Ezekiel's messages about the judgment coming upon the nation, he used parables, allegories, and metaphors.

DROSS IN THE SMELTER— Ezek. 22:17-22

Ezekiel used a metaphor about dross—the leftover substance produced by smelting metals. The metal is heated up until it melts and then the useful metal is separated from the substances that make it impure. A "smelter" is a furnace tool which metal workers used to complete that process.

Israel as dross (Ezek. 22:17-18).

Silver had high value in the ancient world and was recognized as precious and valuable. It was used for money, jewelry, and royal decorations. When gold or silver went through a smelter, it emerged purer, more radiant, and useful for a specific purpose (Zech. 13:9; Mal. 3:2-3). When dross went through a smelter, though, it was separated from those useful metals and then discarded, so it gained nothing from the purification process. Ezekiel likened God's people to worthless dross. Instead of being purified by the smelting process, Israel proved to be like useless metals, instead of silver or gold.

Israel in the smelter (Ezek. 22:19-22).

God said that He was going to gather the Israelites together into the smelter to melt them with the heat of His judgment and wrath. Ezekiel explained that Jerusalem would be the smelter because the Babylonians were going to come and destroy the city (chap. 24). If Israel had been silver or gold, this time of suffering and trial would have purified them, and they would have emerged more holy and devoted to God. (Some Israelites did respond properly, as we see in the shining examples of Esther and Daniel, who were faithful Israelites who served God even in difficult circumstances in foreign lands.) Since the Israelites were dross though, most would simply melt away and be discarded when the destruction came.

God's wrath was poured out because of Israel's faithlessness, idolatry, and bloodshed (2 Kgs. 17:7-23; 2 Chr. 36:2-16). Throughout their time in the land of Israel, the people lived out a cycle of sin. Starting with the time of the judges, they repeatedly fell away from God, came back for a period, and then slid into worse apostasy until everyone simply "did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 17:6; 21:25). Then

they sought a king, symbolizing their rejection of God as King (1 Sam. 8:7-9). David, Hezekiah, and Josiah served as bright spots among the kings, but even they fell into sin at times.

During the time of the divided kingdom (931-586 B.C.), the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom committed blatant sins, rejecting and replacing God with idols, murdering innocent people because of their greed and lust for power, and never wholly worshipping the Lord or living as the people He intended them to be to serve as a blessing to the nations. Now Jerusalem would be the epicenter of God's wrath poured out on sin as Nebuchadnezzar and the armies of Babylon marched in to destroy Jerusalem and the temple and carry many of the people into exile.

God's wrath clearly was deserved. God does not get selfishly angry like humans do. God's anger stems from His righteousness and His love: because of His righteousness He will not allow sin to go unpunished, and because of His love He shows us through earthly consequences what the eternal consequences will be if repentance does not take place.

EVERYONE HAS BEEN CORRUPT— Ezek. 22:23-31

As Abraham begged God to spare the city of Sodom on account of ten righteous men (Gen. 18:16-33), so it might seem that God would spare the nation's holiest city if someone mediated on their behalf. But God made clear to Ezekiel that everyone in Israel shared in the guilt of sin; there was not even a single righteous mediator.

The Lord speaks to the land (Ezek. 22:23-24).

God spoke to His people through Ezekiel and told them that they had not been cleansed despite the many warnings through the prophets and previous judgments, such as

the exile of the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C. and the previous deportation of people, including Ezekiel, from the Southern Kingdom of Judah. As the day of indignation (another way to refer to the day of wrath and judgment) approached, they would not even receive the mercy of rain. Rain was incredibly important for life, and lack of rain led to almost immediate famine throughout the land. God told them that the outpouring of wrath would not be accompanied by rain so its full effects will be felt.

Prophets, priests, princes, and people (Ezek. 22:25-28). Here God walked through the evil actions of each group of Israelite leaders and the people themselves, probably in order of their responsibility and thus guilt (see similar lists in Micah 3:11 and Jeremiah 5:31). From top to bottom, the nation's society was corrupt. First, the prophets conspired to devour people and caused the death of many men, creating widows throughout the land. Instead of preaching the true message of the Lord, they cared about treasure. Court prophets who advised the kings could be directly responsible for decisions that led to soldiers' deaths, misused tax funds, and more. This accusation likely referred to the activities of those prophets.

Second, priests, whose job was to lead in the worship of God by implementing His holiness codes, failed in every aspect. They broke the law instead of walking by it, they made things unholy and unclean, and they even broke the Sabbath, the special day of rest, peace, and focus on Yahweh.

Third, the princes shed blood, referring to physically destroying people, and destroyed souls, referring to spiritually corrupting people. Even the Israelites left alive after the tragic decisions of their leaders had souls that were turned away from God. The

princes were like wolves, tearing and destroying, caring only for satisfying their own greed.

Fourth, the prophets, probably referring this time to those prophets who did not directly advise the kings as court prophets, did not correctly proclaim God's words and warnings to the people. "Untempered mortar" is a substance made of clay instead of lime: it looks the same when first put on Israelite stone houses to smooth the outsides, but it would quickly crumble instead of smoothing over the stones properly, leading to the decay and perhaps destruction of the house. The prophets' words were like this clay mortar. They sounded and looked good at first, but they were ultimately lies that led to ruin.

Finally, the people themselves succumbed to the lying words of the prophets, unholiness of the priests, and greed of the princes. They oppressed, robbed, and stole from others instead of helping them. They "vexed" or hurt three groups of people specifically protected by the law: the poor, the needy, and the stranger (cf. Lev. 19:9-10, 33-34).

No one to turn away wrath (Ezek. 22:29-31). God thus searched in vain for a righteous person to stand in the gap and serve as a mediator for Israel as Moses did (Ex. 32:11-14). All the leaders and people had fallen away. This was perhaps the saddest indictment of all. Because no one came to intercede on behalf of the people, God would now pour out His wrath upon them. They would receive justice instead of mercy, the correct penalty for their actions instead of salvation from the consequences. God's fiery anger would come upon Jerusalem to "melt" those who had turned away from God in every aspect of their lives.

We see here God's wrath and anger poured out on people, and that sort of

activity committed at God's direction can make some Christians uncomfortable. Is God not a God of love? Does He not provide mercy and forgiveness? The answer to both questions is yes, but He also acts with justice and upholds truth. When people destroy and distort His creation, He acts justly to bring consequences. When the Israelite kings murdered people and took their land (1 Kgs. 21; 2 Kgs. 21:16); when the prophets spoke lies to gain favor (1 Kgs. 22:11); when the priests stole the offerings designated for God for themselves (1 Sam. 2:12-36); when the people turned their back on God and worshipped Baal and other false gods, then God was right to bring punishment upon them.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M — The Unrighteous City. Isa. 1:21-26.
 T — Final Judgment Coming. Zeph. 3:1-8.
 W — Like a Refiner's Fire. Mal. 3:1-5.
 T — Unrighteous Teachers. Matt. 23:13-14, 23-33.
 F — Gathering for Judgment. Matt. 25:31-46.
 S — Hope in the Lord. Ps. 119:113-120.
 S — God Pours Out Wrath. Ezek. 22:17-31.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is the dross of silver and what did ancient smelters usually do with it?
2. God tells the Israelites through Ezekiel that they will be gathered in Jerusalem and melted because of His anger (Ezek. 22:19). What historical event does Ezekiel prophesy here?
3. What are the specific groups within Israel named by Ezekiel that had fallen away from God (Ezek. 22:23-28)?

4. Who did God look for in Ezek. 22:30? Did He find a person like this?

REAL-LIFE APPLICATIONS

Sometimes when we hear about the wickedness of the Israelites, it can seem very foreign to us. After all, most likely none of us have ever set up a statue of Baal in our homes and left a wine cup in front of it as an offering. We have all, however, rejected God by choosing sin at some point or another. One easy way to see your sin is to walk through the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:1-17) and ask yourself whether you have broken any of them, even a little. Have you ever told a lie? Have you ever failed to honor your parents? Have you ever put something in the place of God and treated it as more important than Him?

When we move to the New Testament, we see Jesus go even further to the heart of these commandments. Jesus says that even if we hate someone, we have murdered them in our hearts (Matt. 5:21-22). When we stop to think about it, we realize that we are guilty of sin and that we deserve the wrath of God to be poured out on us. We should not skip too quickly to the grace and forgiveness that Jesus offers (and praise the Lord that He does!) without taking seriously the rightful punishment for our sins.

We should also remember that sin is devastating not just for us but also for those around us. Most of the sins that the Israelites committed were especially heinous because they treated both God and others wrongly. Idolatry puts something or someone else in place of God. It usually leads to great selfishness and sometimes even to unintentional cruelty as we passionately seek that thing no matter the consequences to those around us. Lying and deception damage relationships. Re-

fusing to help the poor and needy leaves them mired in poverty and hopelessness. Our sin may seem like not a big deal, but it can have far-reaching effects. Remember the story of the little boy who cried wolf, where his lie led to the destruction of his whole flock of sheep? In the same way, our “small” sins always cause problems in the long run.

A few days before its maiden voyage, one of the officers on the *Titanic* was replaced, and when he left the ship, it is said that he accidentally took the key to a locker in the crew’s nest of the ship. Because of the missing key, the crew was unable to access the ship’s binoculars, and so the lookout did not see the iceberg in time to avoid ramming into it. One small key may have been a large factor in the destruction of an enormous ship and the loss of hundreds lives. In the same way, small sins cause major problems, for us and for others.

We should never underestimate the importance of making decisions that are in line with God’s instructions. We often have no idea of the long-term consequences that can result from sinful decisions.

TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

Purpose

This lesson makes clear the reality of God’s wrath and how it is a response to human sin. God’s wrath is not capricious but linked directly to His justice.

Planning Your Presentation

As you prepare to teach this lesson and this quarter’s series on the wrath of God, consider reading from a Bible encyclopedia or articles online about the wrath of God. This will prepare you to answer questions your students may have, especially during this first week before they

have studied all the upcoming lessons that will explain God’s wrath more fully.

As a class introductory activity, you could bring a set of dominoes and have the students build them into domino rows. Experiencing the “domino effect” will prepare them to understand the cause and effect of sin and God’s wrath in a concrete way. Our sin causes a “domino effect” of bad consequences in our own lives and the lives of others. It leads to God’s righteous judgment. You can also tie elements from the Real-Life Applications section in the lesson if someone jiggles a table or brushes their friend’s dominos accidentally and sends them tumbling by noting that our actions affect others even when we do not mean for them to.

Visual Aid

Draw a circle representing a pond and then ask students what would happen if you tossed a small pebble into the middle of the water. As they answer that it would create ripples, draw concentric circles, small and then extending outward, until it fills up the circle. Just as a small pebble can disturb an entire pond, our sin disturbs everyone around us, even when we do not see it. As we face choices in our lives, we should keep in mind the devastating effects of sin and its far-reaching consequences.

SIN’S EFFECTS

