

The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of pink orchids with green leaves. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, and the leaves are long and slender. The lighting is bright, creating a soft glow around the petals.

Adult Bible Teacher

For Teachers of 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

Large-Print Edition

Adult Bible Teacher

Large-Print Edition

SPRING QUARTER

March, April, May 2026

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Editor in Chief: James M. Leonard, Ph.D.

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Edited and published quarterly by

LIFESTONE MINISTRIES

UNION GOSPEL PRESS

Rev. W. B. Musselman, Founder

ISBN 978-1-64495-781-3

Daily Bible Readings for Home Study and Worship

(Readings are for the week previous to the lesson topics.)

1. March 1. The Dross of Unrighteousness

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.

2. March 8. The Way of the Lord Is Just

M — Our Lack of Righteousness. Isa. 57:11-13.
T — Each of Us Accountable to God. Ezek. 18:4-24.
W — Our Good Deeds Are Polluted. Isa. 64:5-12.
T — A Call to Repentance. Matt. 3:1-10.
F — Two Ways. Matt. 21:28-32.
S — The Way of Repentance. Luke 5:27-32.
S — God's Merciful Justice. Ezek. 33:12-20.

3. March 15. God's Wrath Revealed

M — Creation Reveals God's Glory. Ps. 19:1-6.
T — Never Without a Witness. Acts 14:8-17.
W — The Result of Israel's Idolatry. 2 Kgs. 17:6-20.
T — Turning Away from God. Ps. 106:6-23.
F — Turning to Idols. Ps. 106:24-48.
S — Our Former Lives. Eph. 4:17-24.
S — Exchanging the Glory of God. Rom. 1:18-23.

4. March 22. Jesus Prepares for Death

M — Hope Amid Anguish. Ps. 42:3-6.
T — The Father Turns His Face Away. Ps. 88:1-18.
W — The Glory of Christ's Suffering. John 12:27-33.
T — The Cup of God's Wrath. Jer. 25:15-29.
F — Jesus Drinks the Cup of Wrath. John 18:10-14.
S — Thy Will Be Done. Matt. 6:9-13.
S — The Anguish of Jesus. Mark 14:32-52.

5. March 29. Jesus Bears God's Wrath

M — The Suffering Substitute. Isa. 53:4-12.
T — Christ Bore Our Sins. 1 Pet. 2:21-25.
W — The Day of Atonement. Lev. 16:1-19.
T — A Substitute Sacrifice. Lev. 16:20-34.
F — Jesus Opens the Way to God. Heb. 6:17-22.
S — Purified by Christ's Blood. Heb. 10:19-25.
S — Jesus Dies in Our Place. Mark 15:16-39.

6. April 5. Jesus Overcomes the Grave (Easter)

M — Jesus Foretells His Resurrection. John 2:19-22.
T — Jesus Warns His Disciples. Mark 14:26-28.
W — Prophesying Christ's Victory. Ps. 16:1-11.
T — Death Unable to Hold Christ. Acts 2:22-32.
F — The Significance of Christ's Resurrection.
1 Cor. 15:12-19.
S — Victorious over Hell and Death. Rev. 1:12-18.
S — The Resurrection. Mark 16:1-8.

7. April 12. The Destruction of False Teachers

M — Salvation from Enemies. Ps. 3:1-8.
T — The Lord Delivers the Godly. Ps. 12:1-6.
W — God's Vengeance on Persecutors. 2 Thess. 1:3-12.
T — God Delivers Noah. Gen. 6:1-8.
F — God Delivers Lot. Gen. 19:1-26.
S — Christ Will Come Suddenly. Luke 17:22-37.
S — Judgment of the Wicked. 2 Pet. 2:1-10a.

8. April 19. The Deception of False Teachers

M — The Fruit of False Prophets. Matt. 7:15-23.
T — Lovers of Money. 1 Tim. 6:3-10.
W — Lovers of Self. 2 Tim. 3:1-9.
T — Balaam's Payment. Num. 22:1-7.
F — Balaam's Error. Num. 22:21-35.
S — False Teachers in the Church. Rev. 2:12-17.
S — Followers of Balaam. 2 Pet. 2:10b-22.

9. April 26. God's Righteous Judgment

M — Hypocritical Judgment. Matt. 7:1-5.
T — Only One Judge. Jas. 4:11-12.
W — God's Impartiality. Acts 10:9-35.
T — All Will Be Revealed. Luke 12:1-3.
F — Every Secret Will Be Judged. Eccl. 12:13-14.
S — God's Patience. 2 Pet. 3:8-15.
S — Storing Up Wrath or Glory. Rom. 2:1-16.

10. May 3. Righteousness through Faith

M — Mercy on Unrighteous Mankind. Gen. 8:20-22.
T — Forgiveness through Christ's Sacrifice. 1 John 2:1-2.
W — By Grace through Faith. Eph. 2:1-9.
T — Unable to Keep the Law. Gal. 5:2-6.
F — Lawbreakers. Rom. 2:17-29.
S — Forgiveness Based on Faith. Rom. 4:1-12.
S — The Law of Faith. Rom. 3:21-31.

11. May 10. Saved from Wrath

M — Our Need for Peace with God. Luke 16:19-26.
T — The Coming Day of Wrath. 1 Thess. 5:1-11.
W — Reconciled to God. 2 Cor. 5:18-21.
T — Saved by God's Mercy. Titus 3:3-7.
F — Purpose in Our Trials. 1 Pet. 1:3-9.
S — Rejoicing in Our Trials. Jas. 1:2-4.
S — Peace with God. Rom. 5:1-11.

12. May 17. The Second Adam

M — God's Command to Adam. Gen. 2:15-17.
T — Adam's Disobedience. Gen. 3:1-6, 22-24.
W — The Result of Adam's Disobedience. Gen. 5:1-27.
T — Jesus, the Son of Adam. Luke 3:23-38.
F — Jesus' Obedience. Luke 4:1-13.
S — As in Adam, So in Christ. 1 Cor. 15:20-22, 42-49.
S — The Result of Jesus' Obedience. Rom. 5:12-21.

13. May 24. The End of the Law

M — Keeping God's Law. Lev. 18:1-5.
T — The Basis of God's Salvation. Deut. 9:4-12.
W — The Reason for God's Mercy. Ezek. 20:1-26.
T — The Purpose of the Law. Gal. 3:19-27.
F — Life or Death. Deut. 30:11-20.
S — Obedience Based on Faith. Rom. 9:30-33.
S — Believe and Confess. Rom. 10:1-10.

14. May 31. Christ's Sacrifice Once for All

M — God's Rebuke of Israel's Sacrifices. Isa. 1:9-20.
T — The Limitations of Animal Sacrifices. Ps. 50:7-15.
W — Delighting to Do God's Will. Ps. 40:1-10.
T — Christ Does the Father's Will. John 5:30-36.
F — A Better Mediator. Heb. 7:23—8:13.
S — The Extent of God's Forgiveness. Ps. 103:1-14.
S — A Better Sacrifice. Heb. 10:1-10.

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).

Preparing to Teach the Lesson

TODAY'S AIM

Facts: to learn what Ezekiel prophesied for the unrepentant people of Jerusalem.

Principle: to understand that God's holiness and justice are the basis for His wrath.

Application: to repent of any sins that would incur God's wrath and to look to the One who stood in the gap to save us from that punishment.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

The rulers, priests, and prophets were all corrupt—the people responsible for safeguarding the holiness of the temple. Under such guidance, the house of Israel had become detestable. The Lord had chosen them as His holy people, and they had received His law; yet they had turned their backs on Him. As a result, Ezekiel prophesied of God's coming wrath, the vindication of His holiness.

DEVELOPING THE LESSON

1. The judgment of the people (Ezek. 22:17-22). A common biblical image is the crucible, with God refining

His people like precious metals so that they become pure and holy (cf. Mal. 3:3-4). In Ezekiel's prophecy, however, the focus was on the dross discarded.

God would pour out His wrath upon His corrupt people. Those who continued to defy His holiness would find themselves discarded like the worthless metals that float to the surface when silver is refined in a furnace. They would go through the furnace, but they would not survive the refining process—there was no silver left (Isa. 1:22). The city of Jerusalem would be destroyed by their enemies and cast among the nations (Deut. 28:30-36).

2. The sin of the people (Ezek. 22:23-29). The violent depiction of God's wrath on His people may startle us. However, the house of Israel was guilty before the Lord. Ezekiel's prophecy listed the reasons *why* God would judge them. All of Israel's leaders—the princes, the priests, and the prophets—practiced injustice and profaned the law. God had given them chances to repent, yet they refused and neglected their

charge to guide the people. They lied about what God wanted, proclaiming a word from God when He had not spoken. They were worse than the nations, and God's people had become His enemies (Isa. 1:24).

3. The need of the people (Ezek. 22:30-31). Ezekiel revealed that the Lord had looked for someone to stand in the gap. This imagery refers to a breach in a wall. Israel needed someone to atone for their sins so that they could be holy. In the past, people such as Moses had stood in the gap (cf. Ps. 106:23). It was also the role of the high priest, who

was to guide the people in sacrifice (see Heb. 5:1-3). When Ezekiel prophesied, there was no one to intercede.

God did pour out His wrath on His people, but He left a remnant. He stepped into the gap. On the cross, Christ bore the wrath of God for us. God redeemed us for Himself by stepping in when no one else could (Isa. 59:16-20).

ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON

In the next lesson, we will study about how God's wrath is just. He is faithful to those who turn from their sins but condemns those who sin.

—Katherine Robinson

Studying the Text

JERUSALEM: THE CRUCIBLE OF GOD'S JUDGMENT—Ezek. 22:17-22

God's evaluation of His people (Ezek. 22:17-19). Over fifty times, Ezekiel 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 what God wanted to proclaim to His people.}^{q1} This was important since false prophets said that 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, in this context a representative of God's rebellious people. God told him to listen 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 attacked Israel and destroyed not just Jerusalem but also other cities (cf. Jer. 34:6-7). {Jerusalem, however, was special. It was the city where God dwelled. God's temple was there. For God to judge Jerusa-

lem sent a message—God would not tolerate His people's sin.}^{q2}

When mined, silver is often not pure. This requires a process to remove the 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).}^{q3}

God's gathering of His people for judgment (Ezek. 22:20-22). Israel was God's chosen possession (Deut. 7:6-8). He loved them. He often demonstrated His care for them 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.}^{q4} King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon swept into 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 on 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 but the truth. 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).}^{q5}

JERUSALEM: THE CITY OF THE GUILTY—Ezek. 22:23-31

God's message of judgment (Ezek. 22:23-24). Ezekiel told God's people why the Lord's wrath was coming. He began with the same introductory statement 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 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 previously 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 blood-thirsty killers. Rather than promoting justice, the prophets were self-serving. They robbed the innocent and helpless. Lives were taken, women widowed, and children orphaned.}^{q6}

Judgment upon the priests (Ezek. 22:26). The second group God condemned was the priests. They were entrusted with the sacred task of representing the people to God. The requirements for the task of using the sacred vessels and approaching God were well documented in the book of Leviticus. 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 these instructions. Earlier the Lord showed Ezekiel what was happening in the temple (Ezek. 8). {There were all sorts of idols 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.}^{q7} Jeremiah 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 such as judges. {They were compared to a pack of wolves destroying God's flock for their own gain (22:27).}^{q8}

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 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 them.}⁹⁹

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 gain. Their targets were the poor, needy, and foreigners—the helpless ones of society.}¹⁰⁰ 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 in the city that would repel the Babylonian force that God was going to use to judge Jerusalem. Such a person would be 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, 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. God determined that He 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 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

ILLUSTRATED HIGH POINTS

Ye shall be melted (Ezek. 22:21)

There is something about melting lead in a cast-iron pot. Old lead ingots with dirt, iron, and other particles go in. An intense fire heats the pot so that the temperature of the lead rises to over six hundred degrees. As the lead melts, the impurities rise. Then the impurities are skimmed off and discarded, revealing a molten pool of pure metal. Which best characterizes you—the metal being refined to purity, or the dross to be discarded?

I am profaned among them (vs. 26)

My parents had a station wagon that they bought used at a car lot. After a year or so, we found that the car had an unexpected feature—a large rust hole in the fender that had been filled with steel wool and body filler and repainted. We drove the car for another year or so and then purchased another (from a different dealer). As I prepared to get my first car, I was determined to buy a specific kind. Our experience left an impression that was hard to shake. It took years before I saw that many other cars have an excellent reputation.

Many people are dissuaded from Christianity because of the sinful behavior of some professing Christians. Let us be shining examples of the change that Christ makes in a person's life!

But I found none (vs. 30)

It took one man, Martin Luther, to start the reformation in Germany. It took one man, Winston Churchill, to rally England to stand against Nazi Germany. One person can make all the difference.

As our culture becomes increasingly hostile to God, will you stand for Him even if no one else will?

—Glenn Weaver