



The Prophets & Kings

From Rehoboam To Zedekiah

Book 1

A Daily Devotional Study Guide

Week 60

“The Temple Is Defiled”

Study: Ezekiel 8:1-18

Reading: Proverbs 4:20-27, Philippians 3:17-21

Memory: Isaiah 40:30

What Does the Bible Say?

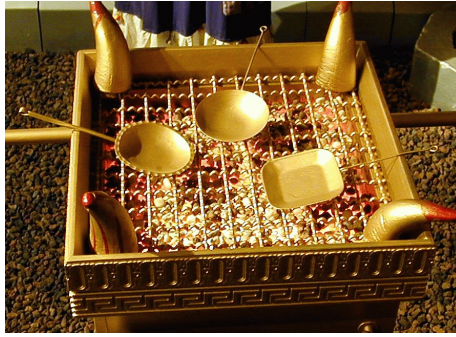
In 592 B.C. Ezekiel was sitting in his house surrounded by many elders of Judah when the Spirit of the Lord moved in him and God gave him a vision. He saw something that looked sort of like a man, but the image had fire below his waist and above his waist was a bright and shining light. This Being reached out his hand and grabbed Ezekiel by the hair and lifted him up, transporting him to Jerusalem. The Spirit took him to the gate of the inner court of the temple where he observed an idol that was set up. Along with this idol, he also saw an image of the glory of God, like he had seen before in the valley near Babylon (vs 1-4).

Ezekiel was told to look to the north and as he did he gazed upon an idol that was in a dominant position north of the courtyard gate. We are not told what this idol was, but it was called the “image of jealousy” indicating that God did not like to share His temple with other gods. God asked Ezekiel if he saw what the people of Judah were doing and how they were committing great sin by even allowing this image to be present in the temple. This was an awful thing, but their abominations were much worse than this (vs 5-6).

The next place Ezekiel was taken was to the entrance of the courtyard of the temple where he saw a hole in the wall of the temple. Ezekiel was told to dig into the wall and as he did so, he saw an entrance that was not supposed to be there. This indicated things that were being done in secret. God instructed Ezekiel to go through the opening and see what was happening inside the walls. When he walked into the temple he noticed

that on the walls there were carved images of all types of animals and beasts. It appears that some were even mythological creatures and images of the false gods the people worshiped. Standing in the temple he saw seventy elders of the land of Judah. Leading these men was Jaazaniah who was the son of Shapan. Shapan was one of the leaders of Judah under Josiah who helped lead the great reform, but now, many

years later, his son Jaazaniah was leading a great rebellion. Each of these men had a censor in their hands and were offering up incenses to their gods. A censor was like a little metal pan which held coals used for burning incense. God told Ezekiel that these elders were doing this in the dark thinking that God could not see them. It appears that this was not just happening in the main temple area,



Censor Pans

but in the side rooms of the temple which were used for offices and storage. These rooms were also filled with images used for false worship (vs 7-13).

Next, Ezekiel was taken back outside the temple to the inner courtyard where there were about twenty-five men with their backs facing the temple. They were facing the east and worshiping the rising sun. God told Ezekiel that the people were doing a terrible thing by defiling the temple. Their sin was stirring the anger of God by the way they treated each other throughout the land. God declared that the people were putting “a branch to their nose.” The exact meaning of this is unclear, but it most likely has to do with a direct act of rebellion against God (vs 14-17).

These actions gave God no choice but to pour out His wrath without pity. The people would cry out in distress to God for help, but God would choose not to hear them (vs 18).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Some of the most outspoken people against religion are those who grew up in religious homes and hardened their hearts to the truth. This appeared to be the case with Jaazaniah. We know that His father was a godly man, but for some reason Jaazaniah chose to be a leader in wickedness among Judah. Scripture reminds us many times to guard our hearts and not to let the enemy get a foothold in our lives. He can blind you and others to the truth easier than you realize as he seeks to hook you on the lies he promotes. His desire is to use religion to drive people away from God rather than to lead men towards God. The challenge for you is to be on guard for your self and those who come after you by setting the example of seeking after God with your whole heart.

When did Ezekiel say this vision took place (vs 1)?

What vision did Ezekiel see (vs 2)?

What did the being do to Ezekiel (vs 3)?

What did Ezekiel see near the entrance to the courtyard (vs 3)?

Who was this image competing with (vs 4-5)?

What did God say the people desired to do (vs 6)?

What was Ezekiel going to see more of (vs 6)?

What did Ezekiel see in the wall (vs 7-8)?

What did God tell Ezekiel to do (vs 9)?

What did Ezekiel see on the walls of the temple (vs 10)?

Who was in the temple (vs 11)?

What were they doing (vs 11)?

What did God reveal that He saw (vs 12)?

Why is it important to realize that you can't hide anything from God?

What did God prepare Ezekiel to see (vs 13)?

Who were the women weeping for (vs 14)?

****This was a god of Babylon who represented spring vegetation.*

What were the men in the temple courtyard doing (vs 16)?

What did God say the actions of these people were doing (vs 17)?

What did God say He was going to do (vs 18)?

“The Executioners”

Study: Ezekiel 9:1-11

Reading: Hebrews 11:1-16, Psalm 58:1-11

Memory: Isaiah 40:30

In many professional sports, when a player is returning from an injury, they will be given a different color jersey to wear during practice. This jersey indicates to the other players to be very cautious and careful around this returning player so he is not injured in a greater way. Many times he will have to sit out of some drills or be passed over in order to avoid any unnecessary contact that would impede his recovery process.

Today, we are going to read how God placed a mark on those Israelites who hated the evil that was taking place in the land, and this mark would help offer great protection to the people.

What Does the Bible Say?

We read in chapter 18 how Ezekiel was transported to Jerusalem and shown the great wickedness which was taking place in the temple. God described how he would not have pity on Jerusalem and then he cried out with a loud voice calling for the executioners to come into the city. Ezekiel saw six men coming from the north and each of these men had a weapon used for killing in their hands. Accompanying these men was a man wearing fine clothes which indicated a high rank. He was carrying the writing tools that a scribe would carry with him and they went into the temple courtyard by the large altar (vs 1-2).

The glory of God which had dwelt in the Most Holy Place in the temple departed the place where he had been resting. This glory moved to the entrance of the temple and called out to the dignitary with the writing utensils. The presence of God told the scribe to go throughout the city and to mark the foreheads of all those who despised the wickedness that the city was involved in. The six men with killing weapons were told to travel through the city and to kill all those who were not marked by the scribe. This death and destruction would extend to all in the city, regardless of age or status in life. They were to start at the temple of God with the elders that were witnessed leading the vile idol worship and then

work their way through the city. They were also instructed to fill the temple and the courtyards with dead bodies, which would be a great defilement to the temple (vs 3-7).

While these men went out to do their duties, Ezekiel was left alone in the temple. All of this was overwhelming to him and he fell on his face and cried. He asked God if the remnant of Israel was also going to be destroyed. God responded by reminding Ezekiel that the people of Judah were guilty of extreme sin. The people had rejected God and instead of viewing the thing that happened as punishment, they declared that God did not see them or care about them. God stated that He would not have pity on the people or spare them from destruction. They would face the full price for their sin (vs 8-10).

Just then, the high ranking man with the writing utensils appeared and told God that he had done as he was commanded. This was to help be a consolation to Ezekiel that even though God would show no mercy as He judged, He would also spare those who despised the evil that was taking place (vs 11).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Two things that were very clear in today’s reading is that God will punish when His children choose not to repent and that God will spare those who choose to follow Him. Ezekiel was brokenhearted over the destruction that was going to take place, and though God was not going to show pity on those who did evil, He was going to show great kindness and spare those who hated the evil that was taking place. This should be a great encouragement to you today. The fact that the godly would be spared should challenge you to live in godliness today. They would still have to face many trials and difficulties, but they would not lose their lives and would be protected from some of the great atrocities that would take place. How exactly this was going to take place was not clear. We do know that many were taken into captivity before judgement came. God knows what He is doing and He has the ability to watch over those who seek after Him.

Thought for the day

Who cried out (vs 1)? - See the previous chapter

What was cried out (vs 1)?

What did the executioners have in their hands (vs 1)?

What did this indicate?

Where did these men come from (vs 2)?

Who else came with them (vs 2)?

How is this man described (vs 2)?

What had left its place above the ark of the covenant (vs 3)?

Where did it go (vs 3)?

Who did the presence of God call out to (vs 4)?

What was the scribe/dignitary told to do (vs 4)?

What were the six men told to do (vs 5)?

Who was going to face this judgment (vs 6)?

Who was this judgement going to begin with (vs 6)? Why?

What was to happen with many of the dead bodies (vs 7)?

What was Ezekiel concerned about (vs 8)?

How did God answer Ezekiel (vs 9-10)?

How had the people responded to the judgement of God up to this point (vs 9)?

What did the dignitary declare he had done (vs 11)? What was significant about this declaration?

“The Amazing Presence of God”

Study: Ezekiel 10:1-23

Reading: 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, Revelation 20:15-26

Memory: Isaiah 40:30

Have you ever tried to describe a dream to someone? Some dreams are much clearer than others, but many dreams are tough to describe because there was so much going on in the dream and it involved so many complex ideas and thoughts. Often dreams have a great mixture of reality and fiction that come from a multitude of past experiences in your life and trying to describe them to someone else is difficult when you yourself are just trying to remember and comprehend what you saw.

Today you are going to read how Ezekiel was overwhelmed and amazed by the vision of God. He did his best to write it down and describe it for his readers, but this was a difficult task since so much of this vision was overwhelming.

What Does the Bible Say?

After the dignitary/scribe had declared his task of marking the faithful was finished, Ezekiel beheld what looked like a magnificent throne. This was accompanied by the cherubim and wheels that were full of eyes. The Being on the throne instructed the dignitary/scribe to gather coals from the middle of the wheels and scatter them all over the city of Jerusalem (vs 1-2).

The cherubim were standing near the south end of the temple when the dignitary/scribe went into the wheel to grab the coals. When he did, a cloud of great glory filled the inner courtyard of the temple. The temple and the courtyard all glowed with an extreme brightness given off by the glory of God. The wings of the cherubim could be heard moving and making a great noise, like a noise you would expect to hear when the Almighty God was speaking (vs 3-5).

The command to grab the coals was repeated and one of the cherubim reached into the wheels and took out some coals and placed it in the dignitary/scribe's hand. He then went out to perform the task that he had been given (vs 6-8).

Ezekiel described the cherubim as he did in chapter 1, most likely because the appearance and presence of these angelic beings was so amazing. One thing that was emphasized was that there were eyes all over the bodies of these beings and all over the wheels that accompanied them. Ezekiel stated that these were the same beings he saw back in Babylon when the vision from God first appeared to him (vs 9-17).

Earlier, Ezekiel had recorded that the presence of God had moved from above the Ark of the Covenant to the threshold of the temple. Now, he recorded that the presence of God moved from there to the south of the temple courtyard entrance where the cherubim were. From there, the cherubim flew to the eastern gate of the temple and the glory of God moved there with them. Ezekiel again repeated some of the information about these cherubim, emphasizing that this was all part of the throne and presence of God (vs 18-22).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Much of what Ezekiel wrote in this passage was already written about earlier. It is not fully clear why he repeated many of the details except for the understanding that what he had been observing was absolutely amazing. What he saw was beyond human comprehension and must have been fully difficult to describe. Reading through it today makes it difficult for us to understand and I am guessing that even in Ezekiel's day, those reading would have had a hard time fully understanding this vision. The one thing that is emphasized is that the throne of God and His glory is an absolutely amazing thing. We as humans can not fully understand or comprehend the great presence of God, but you as a believer have much to look forward to when you meet your Creator face to face one day. This should remind you and thrill you that your God is not of this world and what He has to offer you is so much greater than anything this world could ever dream up.

Suggestions for Prayer

* *Thank God for giving you glimpses of His glory.*

* *Ask God to remind you that there is so much more beyond earth.*

Thought for the day

How did Ezekiel describe the throne that he saw (vs 1)?

What was the dignitary/scribe told to do (vs 2)?

Why do you think he was told to do this?

Where were the cherubim standing (vs 3)?

What filled the courtyard (vs 3-4)?

What did the wings of the cherubim sound like (vs 5)?

How did the dignitary/scribe get the coals (vs 7)?

What did Ezekiel add about the cherubim (vs 8)?

What were the wheels of the cherubim like (vs 9)?

Why do you think the cherubim's movements were in a straight line (vs 10-11)?

Why do you think they were covered with eyes (vs 12)?

What did Ezekiel hear someone call the wheels (vs 13)?

What did Ezekiel state about the cherubim (vs 15)?

What was in the wheels (vs 17)?

Where did the glory of the Lord move to (vs 18)?

Where did the presence of God end up (vs 19)?

What did Ezekiel state about the cherubim (vs 20)?

What did Ezekiel repeat (vs 21)?

Draw what you think these cherubim looked like. (Just kidding!)

“Sudden Death”

Study: Ezekiel 11:1-13

Reading: Acts 5:1-11, 2 Samuel 6:5-15

Memory: Isaiah 40:30

In 2022 much of the sports world was shocked when a NFL player for the Buffalo Bills went into cardiac arrest on the field. Reports said that his heart stopped beating and that he had to be revived by the medical personnel. Because this was a high profile game between two of the top teams in the league at the time, there were millions of people watching these events unfold. After a long time on the field, he was taken away in an ambulance and no one watching was sure if he was dead or alive. The response of the commentators and reporters was one of utter shock and disbelief.

Today, we are going to read how Ezekiel was shocked when he witnessed the sudden death of one of the rebellious leaders of Israel.

What Does the Bible Say?

The Spirit moved Ezekiel to the eastern gate of the temple. There were twenty-five men at this gate. In this group he recognized two men, Jaaszaniah and Pelatiah, who were not priests but were governmental leaders in the land. Ezekiel was told that these men were responsible for a great deal of wickedness in the city. Ezekiel heard these men challenging the others not to focus on building houses (daily living) because they were like meat in a cooking pot. It appears these leaders were stirring up others to be ready to fight and rebel against Babylon rather than to submit. God had commanded the people in Jeremiah 27 to submit to Nebuchadnezzar, but it appears that these men were stirring up other men to fight (vs 1-4).

The Spirit of the Lord prompted Ezekiel to speak and declare to the people that God knew the thoughts of their minds. He knew the actions they had done in secret and one of the things these men had done was multiply the number of people who were killed in the city. They were like meat in a pot, not because of foreign invaders, but because of the way they treated others unjustly and acted in disobedience towards God. They would not be stuck in the “pot” of Jerusalem any longer, but would be

involved in a war that would cause great fear. They would be driven out of Jerusalem and handed over to foreign nations who would enact the judgement of God on them. There would be no place of escape for them anywhere in the land of Israel because God’s judgement would be executed upon them. It would be clear to them in that day that God truly was the Lord of all because all of His words would come true (vs 5-12).

While Ezekiel was talking to those who were conspiring together, one of the leaders, Pelatiah, died suddenly. This shocked Ezekiel because he had been predicting future judgment. This shock caused Ezekiel to cry out to God and wonder if God was just going to kill everyone right then and there (vs 13).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you find yourself fighting against God’s plan and direction for your life? Do you really trust that God will do what He says? Do you understand that He knows your thoughts and the things that are done in secret? Ezekiel was shocked to see what appeared to be a healthy man fall dead right when he was prophesying about death and destruction. Prophecies were often directed at future events, but this revealed that the plan of God was not far off and that it would be accomplished. The power of God over human life was on full display and it was very evident who was in control. All of this should remind you of the importance of looking to God and following Him in obedience. Most of the illustrations of God’s dealing with men reveal the great restraint and patience of God, but there are some events where direct death occurs to people who are disobedient to God’s instructions. Humbling yourself and submitting to God’s plan for your life will be far better than making your own plans and thinking that you are in control.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for being the Giver of life.*
- * *Ask God to help you to submit to Him as sovereign Lord.*
- * *Praise God because He has the power over life and death.*

Thought for the day

Where did the Spirit take Ezekiel (vs 1)?

What did he see there (vs 1)?

What two leaders did Ezekiel recognize (vs 1)?

What did God say these men were doing (vs 2)?

What did the men say the people should not do (vs 3)?

What do you think he meant by describing them as meat in a pot (vs 3)?

What was Ezekiel told to do against these men (vs 4)?

What did God declare about the thoughts of these men (vs 5)?

Why is it important to realize that God knows your thoughts (vs 6)?

What did the Spirit say these men had done (vs 7)?

What did the people fear instead of God (vs 8)?

What was God going to do to them (vs 9)?

What did God want them to know (vs 10)?

Why do you think God wanted them to know this?

What would the people not be (vs 11)?

What do you think is meant by verse 11?

What had the people not done (vs 12)?

What happened while Ezekiel was talking (vs 13)?

How did Ezekiel respond (vs 13)?

Why do you think he responded this way?

“Backwards Thinking”

Study: Ezekiel 11:14-25

Reading: Matthew 19:16-20:1-16

Memory: Isaiah 40:30

One spring, when de-winterizing my boat and getting ready to put it in the water, I made a pretty big mistake when installing the battery. I put the battery in backwards and hooked the positive and negative wires up to the wrong terminals. Fortunately, the boat had several breakers in place to save the boat from major electrical damage, but it did burn out a circuit breaker that was not easily replaced. At least the damage only delayed me from getting on the water for a week or two.

Today, we are going to see how the people of Judah had things backwards. They thought they were experiencing the blessing of God and the exiles were being punished, but they did not realize what was in store for them.

What Does the Bible Say?

In verse 13 Ezekiel had asked God if all of Israel was going to be destroyed. The response of God has been interpreted in different ways. It seems best to think that God was telling Ezekiel that he was going to have new brothers, the exiles in Babylon. These would not be the same brothers that he had in Jerusalem because those in Jerusalem would be destroyed. The inhabitants of Jerusalem appear to have been disassociating themselves from the ones in exile. It seems that they thought the ones in exile were the ones who had done wrong and that this judgement from God on the exiles gave them the right to take over the property of those who were exiled. The Israelites remaining in Jerusalem would face the brunt of God’s judgement, while those who were exiled to different places would experience protection from God (vs 14-16).

God’s plan was never to fully destroy Israel, but He actually moved a remnant out of Israel to help protect them as a nation. One day, they will be gathered back from foreign countries and will be given back the land. These returning exiles will choose to remove the idols from the land and choose to worship God. This prophecy has been partially fulfilled at times, but the full fulfillment will come during the millennial

reign of Christ. It is at that time that God will give them a new heart and a desire to seek after Him. They will no longer be rebellious people with a heart of stone, but they will have hearts that are softened to the Word of God. They will desire to walk in the ways of God and will truly be the people of God because they will desire to seek after Him. This will be the opposite of what they were currently experiencing. Their detestable deeds had brought the judgement of God on their heads (vs 17-21).

After these things were spoken, the cherubim began to lift up their wings and rose from the ground. The glory of the Lord that was originally in the temple and had moved to the eastern gate was now above them and moved with them from the city to the top of the Mount of Olives. It appears as if the glory of God stopped at the top of the mount to look back on the city where it had dwelt for so long. We are not told where the glory traveled to next, but it is assumed that the glory of God departed from the land of Israel. After Ezekiel saw the glory on the mount, he was transported back to Chaldea where the exiles were living. The vision was now over and he told the exiles what the Lord had showed him (vs 22-25).

How Does this Apply to Me?

It is interesting to note that the people in Jerusalem seemed to hold the view that the people in exile had done something wrong to deserve to be exiled while those in Jerusalem assumed they were under the blessing of God. God actually had the exiles removed to help save them and the nation of Israel. In their human minds, they had it all backwards. It is easy for you to do the same today. It is easy to think that difficult times or heartaches are because God has forgotten you and no longer cares about you, but you must realize that whatever God chooses to allow in your life is for your good and for His glory. When you realize that your difficulties and suffering could be a special gift from God for you, it helps change your whole perspective on what you are experiencing.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for the trials he brings into your life.*
- * *Ask God to help you trust Him to do what is best.*

Thought for the day

What did this message come after (vs 14)? (See verses 1-13)

Where did the message come from (vs 14)?

Who was talking about Ezekiel and the exiles (vs 15)?

What were they saying about the exiles (vs 15)?

What did they think that God had done (vs 15)?

What did God say He would be for the scattered Israelites (vs 16)?

What do you think God meant by this?

What is God planning to do (vs 17)?

Why do you think this message of restoration is repeated over and over again?

What will the people do (vs 18)?

Why do you think this was so important to God?

What will God do for them (vs 19)?

What do you think this means?

How will the people act (vs 20)?

What was God going to do to those who were unwilling to follow Him (vs 21)?

What happened when God finished speaking (vs 22)?

Where did the glory of God go (vs 23)? Why?

Where did the Spirit take Ezekiel (vs 24)?

What did he share with the others (vs 24)?

“The Lord of the World”

Study: Ezekiel 12:1-16

Reading: Hebrews 3:1-19

Memory: Isaiah 40:30

What Does the Bible Say?

When God spoke to Ezekiel this time, He started by declaring that Ezekiel lived among greatly rebellious people. Though these people had eyes to see what was happening, they chose not to see what God was doing. Though they had ears to hear what God was saying, they chose not to listen to the declarations of God’s prophets (vs 1-2).

Ezekiel was told by God to gather a few items like an exile would and to travel from one place to another illustrating the journey of an exile. God wanted the people to see what Ezekiel was doing in an attempt to help them understand that their exile was a result of their rebellion and further exile would take place for those still living in Jerusalem. He was told to take his bags and put them outside of his house in the daytime, and then at evening he would travel with the bags. He was to dig a hole in the wall and take his bags of exile with him as he traveled through the hole. This was to indicate the broken down walls of a Jerusalem that the people were forced to travel through. He was to do everything like the people did when they were forced into exile and to be an illustration of what was to come. When he was leaving, he was to cover his face so he couldn’t look back to the land he was leaving, indicating that he would never see it again (vs 3-6).

Carrying out the instructions of God, Ezekiel did as he was told and made sure many saw his actions. The people watched his actions, but didn’t fully understand why he was doing what he did. When they asked him what he was doing he told them the message from God. This message was for Zedekiah in Jerusalem and for all the people left in Israel. This was an example of what was going to be happening soon to all the people who remained in Israel (vs 7-11).

King Zekakiah would be forced to leave Jerusalem at night through a hole in the wall and only be able to take the possessions that he could carry with Him. His face would be covered and he would not be able to see the precious city that he was forced to leave behind. He was captured by the Babylonians and would be taken to the new land, though he would

never see Babylon. He would die before he reached the city (vs 7-13).

The servants and leaders under Zedekiah would be scattered to all different parts of the Babylonian empire. Once again, God declared that He would do this for the purpose of helping the people understand that He was the Lord. To assist those remaining alive understanding that He was the one true God, some would be left alive to testify of the fulfillment of God’s Word that He had spoken through the prophets. They would give clear evidence to the remnant of the people that God was the all powerful God who carried out exactly what He said He would do (vs 14-16).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Many times throughout the prophets, God declared His main purpose for the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem. He wanted the people to recognize the fact that He was God. Because they were stubborn and wouldn’t see what He had done and chose not to listen to what He was declaring, He had to act to show them in a clear and powerful way that He was the only true God and that He would do what He said. God wanted more than just their mental acknowledgment that He was God. He also wanted them to choose to obey and follow Him. God desires the same of you today. He wants you to confess Him as Lord of your life and to choose to obey and follow Him. It is just as easy to be swayed by the false gods of this world in today’s age as it was in the days of the Israelites. The enemy wants you to live for the things of this world and allow those things to become your God, taking your attention and focus away from the one true God.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for giving you illustrations in His Word to learn from.*
- * *Ask God to help you daily recognize Him as Lord of your life.*
- * *Praise God because He is the ruler of the world.*

Thought for the day

Where did God tell Ezekiel that he lived (vs 2)?

What problem did many of the Israelites have (vs 2)?

What was Ezekiel told to prepare (vs 3)?

Why did God want Ezekiel to illustrate an exile (vs 3)?

What was Ezekiel to do in the day and at night (vs 4)?

Why was he to dig through a wall (vs 5)?

Why did God want to make sure that many people saw what Ezekiel was doing (vs 5-6)?

Why was he to cover his face (vs 6)?

How did Ezekiel carry out the instructions of God (vs 7)?

What would the people ask Ezekiel (vs 9)?

Who was this illustration directed at (vs 10)?

What was Ezekiel to say to the people (vs 11)?

What was going to happen (vs 12)?

Where would Zedekiah be taken (vs 13)?

What was going to happen to the people around Zedekiah (vs 14)?

What did God want them to know (vs 15)?

What would God allow to happen to a few of them (vs 16)?

Why would He allow this (vs 16)?

What point do you think God was attempting to drive home?

Memory Verses

Isaiah 40:15 Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust. 16 Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering. 17 All the nations are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness. 18 To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him? 19 An idol! A craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and casts for it silver chains. 20 He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that will not rot; he seeks out a skillful craftsman to set up an idol that will not move. 21 Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22 It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in; 23 who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness. 24 Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows on them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. 25 To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. 26 Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing. 27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God"? 28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. 29 He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. 30 Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted;