

EZEKIEL: JUSTICE FOR ALL

WEEK 2: CHAPTERS 4-11 (HEARTS OF STONE & FLESH)

WARM UP: In these chapters God asks Ezekiel to do some pretty strange public acts, signifying His coming judgement. What's the strangest thing you've ever seen someone do in public (or maybe you've done yourself!)?

In chapters 4-7 God asks Ezekiel to announce and act out his judgement on Israel. I'd encourage you to read it in your own time, there's some pretty interesting stuff in there! Then in chapters 8-11 God gives Ezekiel a vision of Israel's sin, God's judgement on Israel (and especially its leaders), and God's glory departing from His temple. These are intense chapters of judgement that finally conclude with some hope and a promise of Israel's return.

Read Ezekiel 8

The recurring language in this chapter is see/seen (10 times) and look/looked (7 times). This is demonstrated most clearly in v12-13, where the people say "The LORD does not see us", and God says, "Have you seen... you will see."

1. What is the great sin Israel is committing? What would be a modern day equivalent of this sin? Can you recognise it in your own life?
2. Why did Israel think it was okay to do these things? Do you think that's true of people (even God's people) today? Is it true for you sometimes?
3. In 9:1-11:13 we find a description of God's judgement: death (without pity) to all evildoers, and the removal of God's glory from the temple. How does this make you feel? How do you reconcile this with the message of the gospels?

Read Ezekiel 11:14-25

In verses 14-17 we see that, even in exile, God's presence and protection is with his people. This is true throughout the OT: God judges but doesn't completely destroy. His grace is always present. Then we find the incredible promises of v18-21, where God brings about a change only He can do.

4. Have you received an "undivided heart" and a "new spirit" from God? What NT promises can you think of that relate to this? What has been your personal experience of having your heart transformed by God?

PRAY: That you would be able to see clearly your own sin and have the courage to confess it to God and turn away from it. Pray also that God's Spirit would make you new and give you a heart of worship and obedience to God.