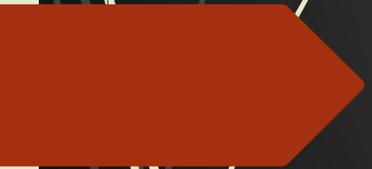


The Book of Ezekiel



Front and center

- ▶ Now we get a break from abominations, in order for there to be justice served in the form of six executioners, lined up to deal with the idolaters in the way they deserve
- ▶ The bronze altar where they gathered was the traditional place for animal sacrifices, unless the evil kings of Israel pushed the altar into the corner to worship idols, but now it would be the place of God's justice
- ▶ What are some ways that God gets us to re-center and focus on Him? When and how do we tend to get off track?



The six executioners

- ▶ We are not told who the six executioners might be, but if they are carrying out God's Will, a good guess would be that they are angels, whose sole purpose is to serve God
- ▶ Six are equipped with weapons of execution, perhaps axes, swords, or a noose, but there is a seventh who only carries a writing case, a box with slots for pen and ink, so that he can record the event
- ▶ What are some of God's harshest methods for dealing with people in this fallen world? Why is seeing these methods difficult for some people?



The mark

- ▶ After we observe these men, we are redirected to the glory of the Lord, who is leaving His resting place in the holy of holies upon the cherub and just exiting the threshold of the door before he speaks again
- ▶ He tells the man with the writing case to put a mark on all those who have mourned all of the idols littering the city of Jerusalem, so that the righteous can be identified and grouped together
- ▶ Are there things that make you reluctant to be grouped in with other Christians? Which things make you proud to be a Christian?



Bullseye

- ▶ The man in linen's marking gives the faithful immunity, so that when the executioners follow after, they have no trouble deciding who should be put to death and who should be spared
- ▶ But among those who do not have the mark, there is no discrimination, no matter how young or how old or if they were men or women, because all kinds had participated in these abominations
- ▶ What makes the idea of this hard to swallow? What protests are we tempted to make?



Carnage

- ▶ Seeing this is quite upsetting, as it would be for us as well, and he starts to feel isolated simply watching the carnage from a distance
- ▶ Ezekiel is never alone, as He might have supposed Himself to be, because God is already acting on behalf of those whom He loves
- ▶ Why do you think Ezekiel felt alone in that moment? In which situations do we feel most alone today?



No more

- ▶ Again overcome by emotion, Ezekiel falls on His face and pleads for the lives of the faithful remnant of the God's people, though they have already been spared
- ▶ Nevertheless, Ezekiel is not questioning God's right to do this, but rather encouraging Him to remember the promises He had made
- ▶ Which injustices are the hardest for you to watch? What does God do to ease the sting of these things?



Split down the middle

- ▶ God mentions both the Israel and Judah as being guilty, highlighting the split between the two when they once had been a united people
- ▶ A big factor in both of their guilt was the rise of wicked kings upon both of their thrones, who led the people unapologetically into idolatry
- ▶ Which sins most often lead to a parting of ways between groups or people? What unites us with everyone else, though a union is sometimes hard to see?



The verdict

- ▶ In poetic fashion, verses 9-10 serve as a recap by repeating the reasons for the Lord's judgment, as they had been stated in previous verses
- ▶ Fittingly, the man with the writing case also comes to announce the verdict, saying that what God had commanded had been done
- ▶ Though angels rarely visit us, how can we still know what God's Will is? What barriers are there to knowing this?

