

EZEKIEL SABBATH SCHOOL CLASS/3
(Primarily Ezekiel, Chapters 4-8)

Notes of Interest: The Israelites coming out of Egypt were known as the "Nation of Israel". The "Nation of Israel" was composed of 12 tribes. However in 925 B. C. the "Nation of Israel" split into two kingdoms. The ten northern tribes became known as The Northern Kingdom or Israel. The two remaining tribes, Judah and Benjamin, were known as the Southern Kingdom or Judah. Israel had been destroyed by Assyria in 721 B. C. If we remember from our earlier lesson, Ezekiel was taken captive to Babylon in 597 B. C. and that is where our lesson takes place with Ezekiel prophesying to Judah in captivity. However the lessons apply to all of Israel and in future lessons we will see why.

Say-Welcome to Sabbath School class today; we are glad you are with us.
Let's bow our heads and ask God to be with us as we learn more from the book of Ezekiel.

Say-We begin our lesson today with a description of someone you may or may not know about. If you know who I am speaking about, you can keep the answer to yourself.

Say-Someone who traded or turned God's laws into wickedness, (Ez. 5:6).
Someone who walked contrary to God's perfect laws, (Ez. 5:7).
Someone who contaminated (defiled) God's Holy place (sanctuary) with idols destroying its sacredness, (Ez. 5:11).

Say-Someone who committed spiritual immorality after other Gods, (Ez. 6:9). Someone who went back to the worship of their Egyptian Gods and embraced pagan superstitions, animal worship and corruption of every kind, (Ez. 8:8-12).

Say-Someone who, instead of weeping for the sins of their nation, wept for the idol Tammuz right at the gate of the Temple of God, endorsing fables the God of heaven hated, (Ez. 8:14). Someone who stood in the Temple of God and turned their back on God and worshipped the rising sun thus promoting sun worship of an imagined Sun God, (Ez. 8:14-17).

Say-Have you figured out who I am talking about? I am sad to say the above description is about God's people and specifically the Nation of Judah. In the Bible, Judah is considered the spouse or wife of God and she had gone astray seeking other Gods, (Strong's 2181, Heb.)!!

Say-Imagine, at one time, the entire nation of Israel was in slavery for 430 years in Egypt and God saw the suffering of His people, called them and "bare them on eagle's wings" and "gathered them unto Himself", (Ex. 19:4).

Say-Imagine how He took them by the hand and led them through the Red Sea, how He fed and nourished His people in the desert and how He brought them to the foot of Mt. Sinai and made a covenant, an agreement with them as in a marriage covenant, (Ex. 19:1-4). He promised them “The good land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey”, (Ex. 3:8).

Say-Imagine being instructed by God for the construction of their place of worship, the Tabernacle, which symbolized the presence of God as He dwelt among them in the wilderness. Imagine being taught by God the instructions for righteous living with His Laws of Love towards Him and one another which today we call The Ten Commandments.

Say-You see, God wanted to take the Israelites into a close, intimate relationship unto Himself. Only the Israelites among every other people, were to maintain the same kingship position as God. They were to be a “Holy people” a “Holy Nation” just as God was “Holy”, (Lev. 19:2). God had set them apart from all others to preserve the knowledge and worship of God.

Say-What did this agreement/covenant say? It said, “Now, if ye will obey my voice, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation, (Ex. 19:5-6).

Say-The Nation of Israel had good intentions and agreed to the covenant and said, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do”, (Ex. 19:8). But we all know the story as revealed in the pages of our Bible, how God’s people began to complain and wish they had never left Egypt. It is difficult to imagine isn’t it, (Ex. 16:3).

Say-The Bible tells us, “God said He would test them to see, “If they will walk in my law or not”, (Ex. 16:4). “But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments ... and my Sabbaths they greatly polluted. Then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them”, (Ex. 20:13).

Say- Canaan, the land God had promised His people, was positioned in the heart of all nations; with Jerusalem considered the center of the entire world. They were to be a “Light” proclaiming the Truth of God and His laws to all the pagan, heathen nations which surrounded them.

Say-When God's people were obedient to Him and worshiped Him with sincere thanksgiving and praise, they were successful and benefited from the surrounding nations. In contrast, when they were unfaithful to Him, God used the surrounding nations to punish them.

Say-Judah had learned no lessons as they witnessed the fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel to Assyria years earlier and would not repent and continued on with the most atrocious abominable idolatries and that is exactly why God's people fell into captivity to the godless nation, Babylon, under King Nebuchadnezzar!!

Say-Far from being a "light" unto the heathen nations, brought God to say, "My people, Judah, are more guilty than the heathen nations surrounding them", (Ez. 5:7). Judah, God's people, His spouse, was without excuse for they KNEW the TRUTH of God and now their punishment would be more severe than the heathen nations whom did not know any better, (Matt. 5:13, 11:21-24, Heb. 10:28-29).

Say-If we put ourselves in Ezekiel's shoes, now we can understand the job facing Ezekiel as a "Watchman" for God. Dashing their hopes for a speedy return to Jerusalem, Ezekiel instead warned God's people in captivity that the 3rd siege was about to happen to the Temple of God and all Jerusalem would fall and more captives would be brought to Babylon unless they repented and turned to God.

Say-Imagine God had at one time called His Temple the "Beauty of His ornament", but now, "The place of majesty and beauty" was going to be destroyed and polluted and He would turn His face from them, (Ez. 7:20-22). Back in Jerusalem, Jeremiah was preaching the same message to those which remained, pleading for the repentance of Judah's wickedness, that if they would return back to God, Jerusalem would not fall.

Say-Did Judah listen? NO! Blinded spiritually by sin, rejecting direction from God and His prophets, they went on erecting idols in the Temple of God and making cakes to the "Queen of Heaven" in the shape of the moon, openly provoking the God of Heaven, and yet they would come and stand before God in His Holy Temple, (Jer. 7, Ez. 23:37-39).

Say-Their hardened hearts despised God's perfect laws. They polluted and defamed His Sabbaths and with lust and greed, fell for superstition and believed that the Temple in Jerusalem could

never be destroyed because the Temple had been chosen by God as His dwelling place, (Jer. 1-4). How wrong they were!

Say-It is an interesting story of how God instructed Ezekiel to warn His stubborn people. He was to map out the city of Jerusalem on a large stone and demonstrate the impending siege on the city. Then Ezekiel was to lay on one side for 390 days and on the other side for 40 days, equaling the period of time they were slaves in Egypt. God was trying to show them He would bring them back to bondage as bad as the one in Egypt if they did not repent and turn to Him as a righteous people.

Say-In another warning from God, Ezekiel's food was limited also to show the people instead of the fine simple flour used for delicate cakes (Gen.18:6), now they would have six different kinds of coarse grain such as the poorest would eat and in limited quantities, (Ez. 4:9).

Say-In yet another warning, Ezekiel was to shave off his hair signifying severe and humiliating treatment was about to happen, (II Sam. 10:4, 5). Destruction by the sword, famine and plagues were going to destroy many of the people and the rest would be scattered among the nations with only a few who were faithful to God, escaping.

Say-Yes, the wickedness of His people grew worse and worse and while the captivity of Judah and the fall of Jerusalem had been predicted by Isaiah and Jeramiah 100 years before, it was all brought on by their disobedience to God, (Isaiah 39:6, Jer. 25:11,12).

Say-What was the purpose of their punishment? It was the only way they would learn and know, "That I am the Lord their God", (Ez. 6:7, 10, 13; 7:4, 9:17).

Say-While this story is about the physical nation of Israel and specifically Judah, the message applies to a future time for all of God's people. We can ask ourselves as God's people, how are we doing individually and as a nation? We can ask ourselves, does our nation worship and honor the true God of Heaven?

Say-We can ask ourselves, do our schools and universities teach and promote "Righteous laws of God"? Are we as individuals a "Light" in our community and among our friends and acquaintances? Do we walk with God or contrary to Him?

Say- We live in a society where the culture is not much different than at the time of Ezekiel. We witness a nation which has turned its back on God's Sabbaths, in fact changed the Sabbath to the day of the sun and the majority lacks any knowledge of God's Holy Days. We witness a culture of man-made religions promoting the pagan celebrations which date back to ancient Babylon, (Tammuz, equivalent to Osiris in Egypt, Adonis of the Greeks and the Goddess Ishtar/Astarte and Ashtoreth and the Saturnalia).

Say-However, the good news is the call still goes out from God's church and the work of the "Watchman" to all who will listen proclaiming God's Holy and righteous laws to all nations. GTA has repeatedly reminded us to "Come out of spiritual Babylon", to humble ourselves and seek God with sincere worship that we may be accounted worthy to escape all things in the "Time of trouble to come". Let us help one another do just that!

Say-What does it mean to "Come out of spiritual Babylon"? Go back and re-read the description at the beginning of our lesson and make sure we are not a part of any false religion but firmly rooted in the Truth of God.

Say- Some more good news is, we worship a God who will soon change the world and as we continue our study in Ezekiel, we will find out how He will do just that. Remember His promise to all of us found in our memory verse.

MEMORY VERSE
THEY SHALL KNOW I AM THE LORD.
EZEKIEL 6:7, 10, 13; 7:4, 9:7

Here are some pictures to choose from for your memory verse picture
<http://www.sermons4kids.com/let-your-light-shine-colorpg.htm>

<http://sermons4kids.com/good-news-colorpg.htm>

http://www.sermons4kids.com/awesome_god_colorpg.htm

Here is the memory verse for cutting out to put with their picture to color for their notebook.

MEMORY VERSE
*THEY SHALL KNOW I AM THE
LORD.
EZEKIEL 6:7*

On the next page is the Sabbath School lesson for tots. They will use one of the pictures above to color also.

EZEKIEL, THE SERVANT OF GOD

THE SERVANT OF GOD, EZEKIEL,
I WANT TO BE LIKE HIM;
HE FOLLOWED GOD'S COMMANDMENTS
INSPITE OF RESISTANCE FROM GOD'S
PEOPLE LIVING IN SIN. (EZ. 6:9)

THE SERVANT OF GOD, EZEKIEL, THE WORK
OF A "WATCHMAN" HE DID DO;
HE WARNED THE NATIONS AND THE
PEOPLE OF GOD TO WORSHIP THEIR
CREATOR IN TRUTH.

BUT MANY WOULD NOT LISTEN, ONLY A
FAITHFUL FEW;
SOON PUNISHMENT FELL UPON THEM
AS GOD PROMISED HE WOULD DO.
(EZ. 4, 7, EZ. 6:8)

GOD'S HAND STRETCHED OUT UPON THEM;
SAYING, THEY MUST RETURN UNTO ME;
FOR THIS IS THE ONLY WAY, THEY WILL
KNOW I AM THE LORD INDEED! (EZ. 6:14)