

Pillar Passages – Ez 35
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Welcome to another Pillar Passage. Today we are talking about Ezekiel 35.

This is a prophesy against Mount Seir, which was a mountain in the land of Edom—which stands for red. It was right next door to Israel. This people descended from Esau, the brother of Jacob. Therefore, this is a nation that is a cousin to the nation of Israel. When the Babylonians came in—as we will see today—the nation of Edom all them, even helped them, in their destruction of Judah and of Israel—the two kingdoms that make up the kingdom of God.

There is a prophesy against Edom here. One of the ways we know this, though Edom is never mentioned here, is Mount Seir but also here in verse 6 the repeated word of blood. I will prepare you for blood, and blood shall pursue you; ‘because you did not hate bloodshed, therefore blood shall pursue you.’ This is a play on words. The Hebrew word for blood and the word here for Edom, it is undoubtedly referring to Edom.

But why is this here? If you haven’t listened yet to the video on Ezekiel 34, I would encourage you to do so. Truly a Pillar Passage on shepherds, and on the shepherds of Israel. Some people think that this chapter was added after that chapter later, because it seemingly makes no connection to the prior chapter. However, I think the logic makes sense. If God—as He was promising to do in the previous chapter—was going to return His people to the land, one question they will have is about the people who still live there. The people who helped kick us out—our cousins the Edomites who betrayed us murderously—what about them? If You’re going to return us, aren’t they still there? So that is where this chapter comes in.

Verse 3, it says that God is going to resist them. In fact, God will be against them. God will stretch out His hand against them. Why? Because of their pride—as we will see. Because of their pride; because they have cherished perpetual enmity—hatred, as we will see—hatred over their cousins; over the people of Israel. Therefore, out of this hatred, at the time of their calamity, at the time of their final punishment, they gave over the people of Israel to the power of the sword. God will return that favor. He will act justly with Edom. He will deal with them in the exact same way they dealt with Israel. According to their (verse 11) their anger and envy that grew out of their hatred.

Before we go any further, we need realize here that God is operating by His own law call *lex talionis*—the law of an eye for an eye. Which was never meant to heighten punishment, but actually to limit punishment. *Lex talionis* says you *only* punish eye for an eye. You don’t do life for an eye. You don’t do arm for an eye. You don’t do eternal punishment for an eye. You do eye for an eye. That is what God is doing here. What we see here is equality of justice. No more than what was originally done, but equal to it.

Again, we should note here, again in verse 11, that their anger and their envy was rooted in hatred. Put this another way; the great commandment to love the Lord your God and to love your neighbor as yourself, this is the gateway to all other holiness. This is the gateway to the transformation of sin to all other holiness. Or to put it in the negative; this failing—going defective—with this commandment—the great commandment—is what causes all other sins. Their anger and their envy grew out of their hatred—their defective love.

Their sins against Israel—their murderous betraying sins—were rooted in defective love. Though it should be noted, their murder and their betrayal was rooted in anger and envy, and covetousness. We are like onions and have layers. But at the bottom—we are what we love.

Verse 12. Therefore, God will make Himself known to them in His judgement. Why? Because He's heard all their revilings. He has heard what has come out of their heart. He has heard how they celebrate that Israel is laid desolate. Even though God is the one who brought that discipline, He's heard their celebration of it, so He will make Himself known among the people. He has, and He will. This is our kingdom proclamation. Jesus has come and He will make Himself known again. We can either do this the hard but blessed way, or we can do the harder but tragic way. Which way will it be? That is essentially our kingdom proclamation.

One question: Why is this in the Bible? Because it would have undoubtedly been encouraging to the people. It would be encouraging to the people, that God would deal justly with the nations, just as He dealt justly with them. God is not unjust. God bring discipline—sometimes through unbelieving harsh nations. Yet He will deal justly with those tools He uses as well; just as He deal with God's people. God is not unjust. He still loves His people. He will redeem them through judgement.

Think about this for a second; He will redeem them through judgement. He will return them to the land. One of the ways He will do this is through the judgement He will bring upon Edom the enemies of God's people. God brings salvation through judgement in order to show Himself as the Lord. This we see most clearly on the cross. On the cross, where God poured out all of His judgement for our sin on Jesus so that we could be saved.

But, then at the end of time, for all who resist Him; for all who deny Him; for all who speak evilly of Him, God will bring is final judgement. He will bring salvation through that judgement. One place this comes up in the New Testament is in 2 Thessalonians, chapter 1, where Paul says the sufferings, the persecutions, the afflictions of God people is present evidence that is something still yet to come. There is a righteous judgement that God is going to bring upon those people who bring this persecution and this affliction. This persecution and this afflictions is actually proof that may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God for what you are suffering.

But at the same time, God out of that of that justice will bring, and will repay with affliction those who afflict us. The reason why He will do this, is to grant relief to His people at the time with the Lord Jesus is reveal from heaven and our salvation is complete.

Those who reject Him will suffer on that day the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord. That's what hell is. It is the lack of the presence of God and being separated from the glory of His might. Because it is the glory of His might where we find life, and pleasure, and abundance forever more. When He comes, He will do this and save us through judgement, so on that day He might be known among His people, and might be glorified and marveled at among all who believe.

In this hope, we stand firm today. As we stand firm in this hope—this strange; awful, in some way—hope, we may wait for that day. As we wait, we may pray that God would make us worthy of His calling to us now—of what He wants us to do now—and may fulfill every resolve.

What do you resolve to do good about these days, as you wait for His full justice?

As I speak these words, the state of California is feeling the after affects of the recall as our government feels—it seems to me—more emboldened to pass more radical laws that affect us; that affect Christians and nonChristians alike; that affect children; parents in sometime tyrannical and dictatorial ways. As we feel this, we can hope, and lean on and trust the fact that God see all of it. God sees all of it. Every tyrannical and unjust ruling from a court or from a state legislature, or from a governor's pen. God sees all of it and one day He will deal with it. We can rest in that; and we can smile in the face of that. Then we can pray, God will You fulfill despite that. Will You set a table for me in the presence of my enemies? And would You fulfill every resolve that occurs to me for good, while I wait for You to bring all good? Will You bring power as I trust in You? As I trust in You, I will step out and I will work for good. So, as I trust in You, will You give power so that Your name may be glorified even now.

But in all this, we need His grace. His grace flows to us by His Spirit as we trust in His promises.