

# Ezekiel 14 - Prophecy Against Idolatry of the Elders; The Certainty of the Destruction of Jerusalem

## I. Imminent judgment upon Judah (Ezek 1:1—24:27)

### (2) Prophecies of coming judgment against Judah and Jerusalem (Ezek 4:1—24:27)

#### (B) Shattering false securities (Ezek 12:1—19:14)

##### (d) Fourth false security: idols (14:1-11)

###### (i) Elders' idolatry (14:1-5)

###### (ii) Elders must repent (14:6-11)

##### (e) Fifth false security: presence of a righteous remnant (14:12-23)

###### (i) Ineffectiveness of a righteous remnant (14:12-20)

(a) Noah, Daniel, and Job cannot save land from famine (14:12-14)

(b) Noah, Daniel, and Job cannot save land from beasts (14:15-16)

(c) Noah, Daniel, and Job cannot save land from sword (14:17-18)

(d) Noah, Daniel, and Job cannot save land from plague (14:19-20)

###### (ii) God will bring famine, beasts, sword, and plague upon Israel (14:21-23)

## Ezekiel 14

### (d) Fourth false security: idols (14:1-11)

#### (i) Elders' idolatry (14:1-5)

**1** Then some **elders of Israel** came to me and sat down before me.

**1** Then some elders of Israel came to me and sat down before me.

**1** Later, some men from the elders of Israel came to visit me. After they had sat down in my presence,

**1** Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me.

- "...elders of Israel" - the same men who visited Ezekiel in 8:1; like Ezekiel, the "elders of Israel" were captives in Babylon. These are not the same men as the "elders of Jerusalem" (8:11-12).

— After they finally recognized his prophetic authority, they came to Ezekiel and sat before him

**2** And the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

2 And the word of the Lord came to me, saying,

2 this message came to me from the LORD.

2 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

- While the elders of Israel were sitting before Ezekiel, the "word of the LORD" came to Ezekiel...not to answer the elder's inquiries, but to condemn them

3 "Son of man, these men have **set up their idols in their hearts** and have **put in front of their faces the stumbling block of their wrongdoing**. **Should I let Myself be consulted by them at all?**

3 "Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts and have put right before their faces the stumbling block of their iniquity. Should I be consulted by them at all?

3 "Son of Man, these men have taken idols into their hearts. They've placed the stumbling block that is their own iniquity right in front of their faces. Should I be consulted by them at all?

3 Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?

- It appears as if God is provided Ezekiel "inside information" about the hearts of these elders, to give Ezekiel a better understanding

- These elders were guilty of idolatry in two ways:

- "...set up their idols in their hearts" - internally, they harbored deep-rooted idolatry in their hearts

- "...put in front of their faces the stumbling block of their wrongdoing" - externally, what was harbored in their hearts was also reflected in their external worship of idols

- "...Should I let Myself be consulted by them at all?" - reveals the reason these elders came to Ezekiel: to know if God had a message for them

— The obvious answer to God's rhetorical question is...no, you should not entertain inquiries from these elders, whose hearts are so deeply devoted to idolatry

4 Therefore speak to them and tell them, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: "Anyone of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, puts in front of his face the stumbling block of his wrongdoing, and *then* comes to the prophet, I the LORD will let Myself answer him in the matter in view of the multitude of his idols,

4 Therefore speak to them and tell them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Any man of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and *then* comes to the prophet, I the LORD will be brought to give him an answer in the matter in view of the multitude of his idols,

4 Therefore, speak up and tell them, 'This is what the Lord GOD says, "Every person from Israel's house who follows his idols and sets the stumbling block that is his own sin in front

of his face, and then consults a prophet, I the LORD will answer him according to how many idols he embraces.

**4** Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;

- God did answer the elders, but not in the sense of addressing their specific questions. Instead, His response indicates that He had chosen to confront the elders' deep idolatry by inundating them with an abundance of idolatry.

- The Lord is clearly upset that these elders, steeped in idolatry, had the audacity to seek guidance from a prophet like Ezekiel (while also consulting false prophets, Cf. Ezek 13)

- God responded that He would respond according to the multitude of their idols. This means that He would not answer them with words addressing their specific inquiries, but rather He would respond through His deeds, which would result from their idolatry.

5 in order to **take hold of the hearts** of the house of Israel who have turned away from Me due to all their idols."

5 in order to lay hold of the hearts of the house of Israel who are estranged from Me through all their idols."

5 I'll do this in order to capture the hearts of Israel's house who have become alienated from me due to all of their idols.""

5 That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.

- "...take hold of the hearts" - these elders had led the nation into idolatry, and the people followed them like sheep. God held the elders responsible not only for their failed leadership, but also for what was in their hearts.

- Even the elders who did not publicly practice idolatry would still be held accountable for their internal waywardness from God. Externally they may have appeared to be conforming to worship of God, but their true longing was for idol worship.

- As a result, all of the elders were estranged from God, so God decided to inundate them with idolatry to such an extent that they would finally realize its utter futility

(ii) Elders must repent (14:6-11)

**6** "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: "**Repent** and **turn away** from your idols, and **turn your faces away** from all your abominations.

**6** "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Repent and turn away from your idols and turn your faces away from all your abominations.

6 "Therefore you are to tell Israel's house, 'This is what the Lord GOD says, "Turn away! Turn away from your idols, and abandon your detestable practices!"

6 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.

- "...Repent...turn away...turn your faces away" - in light of God's warning in v4-5, the elders are urged to repent from their idolatry by doing three things:

- Return to the worship of the One True God
- Turn themselves from their idols
- Turn away their faces from all of their abominations

— In other words, they were not only to turn from idolatry externally by removing statues and shrines, but must also repent inwardly by eliminating the idolatry from their hearts

7 For anyone of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who reside in Israel, who deserts Me, sets up his idols in his heart, puts in front of his face the stumbling block of his wrongdoing, and *then* comes to the prophet to request something of Me for himself, I the LORD will let Myself answer him Myself.

7 For anyone of the house of Israel or of the immigrants who stay in Israel who separates himself from Me, sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and *then* comes to the prophet to inquire of Me for himself, I the LORD will be brought to answer him in My own person.

7 For when a native Israeli or a resident alien abandons me to set up idols in his heart behind my back, and then places the stumbling block of his iniquity right in front of his own face, then approaches a prophet to inquire of me on behalf of his own self-interest, I, the LORD will answer him myself.

7 For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me; I the LORD will answer him by myself:

- God's call to abandon idolatry was to every person in Israel, Jews as well as Gentiles living in the Land ("the strangers who reside in Israel")

- If they failed to do so, God would personally answer such individuals, and not in the manner that they hoped for

8 I will set My face against that person and make him a sign and a proverb, and I will **eliminate him** from among My people. **So you will know that I am the LORD.**

8 I will set My face against that man and make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from among My people. So you will know that I am the LORD.

8 I'm determined to oppose that person and make him an example. Proverbs will be written about him when I eliminate him from my people. Then you'll know that I am the LORD.'"

8 And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

- This describes the nature of God's response/judgment...He would "set His face" against those who sought guidance from Ezekiel if their hearts remained in idolatry

- He would punish them in such a way that they would become a "sign" and a "proverb"

- Similar statements had been made about Jerusalem (Cf. 5:15), so what was true of the nation would also be true of the individual

- "...eliminate him" - *karat*, "to cut off" referring to physical death; frequently used in the Mosaic Law for execution (Cf. Lev 7:20,21,25)

- Death as punishment for idolatry was in keeping with Lev 20:1-6 (referring to idolatrous individuals) and Deut 28:36-37 (captivity as punishment for national idolatry)

- During Ezekiel's time, both forms of idolatry (individual and national) were prevalent, so both forms of being "cut off" (physical death for individual; exile/captivity for national)

- "...So you will know that I am the LORD" - this punishment would lead people to recognize the true nature of God

### On False Prophets

9 "But if the prophet is persuaded so that he speaks a word, it is I, the LORD, who have persuaded that prophet; and I will stretch out My hand against him and **eliminate** him from among My people Israel.

9 "But if the prophet is prevailed upon to speak a word, it is I, the LORD, who have prevailed upon that prophet, and I will stretch out My hand against him and destroy him from among My people Israel.

9 "Now as to the prophet, if through deceit he delivers a message, I the LORD have deceived that prophet! I'll reach out in opposition to him and exterminate him from among my people Israel.

9 And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the LORD have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.

- Now, the punishment of false prophets...

- Those who wished to engage in false prophecy would be permitted to do so, but God would cause them to be deceived. If they were deceived and spoke a deceitful word, it would be because God had deceived them.

- This passage reflects a principle of divine dealing. It does not imply that God deceived the false prophets in order to make them false, but rather that these prophets were already

false.

— It means that those who were self-deceived would experience further deception as a consequence

— A notable example of this principle in action is found in 1 Kings 22:19-23, where God sent a lying demon to the false prophets of Ahab, leading to their deception and ultimately to Ahab's death

— In Ezekiel, this divine deception was the punishment for the previous sins of the false prophets

- "...eliminate" - *šāmad*, to destroy, overthrow, or exterminate; refers to physical death

10 And **they** will bear *the punishment for their* wrongdoing; as the wrongdoing of the inquirer is, so the wrongdoing of the prophet will be,

10 They will bear *the punishment of* their iniquity; as the iniquity of the inquirer is, so the iniquity of the prophet will be,

10 They'll bear the consequences of their guilt, and the prophet will be just as guilty as the one who seeks that prophet's guidance.

10 And they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity: the punishment of the prophet shall be even as the punishment of him that seeketh unto him;

- Addresses the punishment of both the false prophets and those who sought guidance from them

- "...they...their" - both the false prophets and the inquirers

— This means that the guilt of those who sought guidance from the false prophets was the same as the false prophets themselves

11 in order that the house of Israel may no longer stray from Me and no longer defile themselves with all their **offenses**. So they will be My people, and I shall be their God," declares the Lord GOD."

11 in order that the house of Israel may no longer stray from Me and no longer defile themselves with all their transgressions. Thus they will be My people, and I shall be their God," declares the Lord GOD."

11 Then Israel's house won't wander away from me again, nor will they defile themselves again with all their transgressions. They'll become my people and I'll be their God," declares the Lord GOD.

11 That the house of Israel may go no more astray from me, neither be polluted any more with all their transgressions; but that they may be my people, and I may be their God, saith the Lord GOD.

- Outlines four objectives behind God's decision regarding the false prophets and those who sought guidance from them:

- To prevent the house of Israel from straying further from God through idolatry
- If God's people repented, they would no longer defile themselves "with all their offenses"
- "...offenses" - *pish' ehem*, transgressions; deliberate violations of specific commandments
- The goal was that the people would stop acting contrary to the Mosaic Law
  - That Israel would re-establish their relationship as God's people
  - The ultimate purpose was for God to once again be recognized as their One True God

(e) Fifth false security: presence of a righteous remnant (14:12-23)

Verses 12-23 teach a crucial principle of divine justice: once a nation's sin exceeds a certain limit, no amount of intercession will help. Not even individual righteousness brings hope.

(i) Ineffectiveness of a righteous remnant (14:12-20)

(a) Noah, Daniel, and Job cannot save land from famine (14:12-14)

**12** Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

**12** Then the word of the LORD came to me saying,

**12** This message came to me from the LORD:

**12** The word of the LORD came again to me, saying,

- The series of prophecies God gave to Ezekiel continue (began in Ezek 12)...

- God now gives specific examples and types of judgment, emphasizing that the presence of a few righteous individuals would not mitigate His judgment

— In the past, would've spared Sodom for the sake of just a few righteous people (Cf. Gen 18:16-33), yet here Judah's condition had deteriorated beyond that of Sodom

— Thus, even if three righteous men, Noah, Daniel and Job (v14) lived in Judah, God would not relent on His judgment

**13** "Son of man, if a country sins against Me by **being unfaithful**, and I stretch out My hand against it, destroy its supply of bread, send famine against it, and eliminate from it *both* human and animal *life*,

**13** "Son of man, if a country sins against Me by committing unfaithfulness, and I stretch out My hand against it, destroy its supply of bread, send famine against it and cut off from it both man and beast,

**13** "Son of Man, when a nation sins against me by a treacherous act, I'll reach out to oppose it, destroying its source of food, by sending famine against it, and by destroying both people and beast within it.

13 Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it:

- The first type of judgment would be famine

- "...being unfaithful" - in Hebrew this phrase consists of two words from the same root, *maal*, meaning "to act unfaithfully" or "to act treacherously"

- Hebrew scholars note that most often in the OT, *mā'al*, denotes Israelite infidelity to God, meaning they were breaking the Mosaic Law

- In Deut 11:16-17, Moses provided final instructions to the Israelites, outlining blessings for following God's commandments and curses for turning to idols. In that passage, Moses specifically mentioned famine as a consequence of idolatry

Deut 11:16-17:

16 Beware that your hearts are not easily deceived, and that you do not turn away and serve other gods, and worship them.

17 Otherwise, the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and He will shut up the sky so that there will be no rain, and the ground will not yield its produce; then you will quickly perish from the good land which the LORD is giving you.

- In v13, God is telling Ezekiel that He intends to follow through on the consequence outlined in Deut 11:16-17

- The famine would be so severe that it would "eliminate" both human and animal life

14 even *though* these three men, **Noah, Daniel, and Job** were in its midst, by their *own* righteousness they could *only* **save themselves**," declares the Lord GOD.

14 even *though* these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job were in its midst, by their *own* righteousness they could *only* deliver themselves," declares the Lord GOD.

14 Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job lived in that land, they would only save their own lives on account of their righteousness," declares the Lord GOD.

14 Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD.

- God states unequivocally that not even the presence of Noah, Daniel, and Job would prevent impending judgment. If they were present in Israel at this time, their righteousness would only be enough to save themselves, not Israel as a whole.

- "...Noah" - his righteousness is documented in Gen 6:9

- His holiness was enough to save his wife, three sons, and three daughter-in-laws from the Flood, but was not sufficient to rescue the unbelieving world

- "...Daniel" - his righteousness is affirmed in Dan 1:8; 6:4-5,22

- Daniel was an Israelite living in a pagan nation (taken into exile in Babylon during Nebuchadnezzar's first siege of Jerusalem), and a contemporary of Ezekiel



- Ezekiel's audience was likely well-aware of Daniel and his righteous reputation
- "...Job" - his righteousness is affirmed in Job 1:1,8; 2:3; he was a pre-Israelite saint
- What God through Ezekiel is addressing here is the objection of some in Judah that God would not destroy them because there were righteous men among them
- God's response was, Sure there are some righteous people among you because I always preserve a remnant, however the presence of righteous men does not spare the rest of the community, nor guarantee their well-being
- God gives a similar thought in Jer 15:1 when He says, "*Even if Moses and Samuel were to stand before Me, My heart would not be with this people. Send them away from My presence and have them go!*"
- "...save themselves" - *natzal*, "to deliver oneself"; this phrase is significant to the entire passage, and appears 7x in v14-20
- It is associated with the Exodus where God delivered His people from bondage (Cf. Ex 3:8; 5:23; 6:6). It's interesting that God delivered His people in the Exodus, but here He now poses as the enemy from whom delivered is needed.

(b) Noah, Daniel, and Job cannot save land from beasts (14:15-16)

- 15 "If I were to cause vicious animals to pass through the land and they depopulated it, and it became desolate so that no one would pass through it because of the animals,
- 15 "If I were to cause wild beasts to pass through the land and they depopulated it, and it became desolate so that no one would pass through it because of the beasts,
- 15 "If I were to make wild animals pass throughout the land, so that they kill its residents and it were to become desolate because no one will travel through it due to those wild animals,
- 15** If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the beasts:
- The second type of divine judgment, after famine (v13-14) was death by wild animals. Wild animals were among the instruments that God used to execute His judgment.
  - In Jer 15:3, God proclaimed His intention to appoint four kinds of agents to bring punishment on His people: "And I will appoint over them four kinds *of doom*," declares the LORD: "the sword to kill, the dogs to drag away, and the birds of the sky and the animals of the earth to devour and destroy."
- 16 *though* these three men were in its midst, **as I live**," declares the Lord GOD, "they could not save either *their* sons or *their* daughters. They alone would be saved, but the country would be desolate.
- 16 *though* these three men were in its midst, as I live," declares the Lord GOD, "they could not deliver either *their* sons or *their* daughters. They alone would be delivered, but the

country would be desolate.

16 then even though these three men were in it, as I live," says the Lord GOD, "they wouldn't be able to deliver even their sons or daughters. They would only save themselves, but the land would become desolate.

16 Though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate.

- God again reiterates that even the presence of righteous men like Noah, Daniel, and Job would not have influenced this outcome

— Noah was at least able to rescue his family, but now the situation in Judah had deteriorated to such an extent that the righteous were only able to deliver themselves from judgment, not even their families

- "...as I live" - used 16x in Ezekiel and only 6x elsewhere (Num 14:21,28; Is 49:18; Jer 22:24; 46:18; Zeph 2:9)

— A variation of this oath, "As YHWH lives," is used 41x in the OT and "As God lives" is used 2x (2 Sam 2:27; Job 27:2)

00 The basic meaning of all three versions is the concept that God is the living God.

Therefore, He is always watching over His people and His word to be sure it is fulfilled.

(c) Noah, Daniel, and Job cannot save land from sword (14:17-18)

17 Or *if* I were to bring a sword on that country and say, 'A sword is to pass through the country,' and I eliminated human and animal *life* from it,

17 Or *if* I should bring a sword on that country and say, 'Let the sword pass through the country and cut off man and beast from it,'

17 "Or if I were to bring war to that land and say, 'Hey, sword! Pass throughout the land so I can destroy both man and beasts in it,'

**17** Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off man and beast from it:

- After famine (v13-14) and wild beasts (v15-16), the third type of divine judgment is the sword

— The message here is the same: because of Israel's deep sin, God will bring a sword upon the land that would reap violent death on a massive scale, to both man and beast

18 even *though* these three men were in its midst, as I live," declares the Lord GOD, "they could not save either *their* sons or *their* daughters, but they alone would be saved.

18 even *though* these three men were in its midst, as I live," declares the Lord GOD, "they could not deliver either *their* sons or *their* daughters, but they alone would be delivered.

18 though these three men lived there, as I live," declares the Lord GOD, "they couldn't deliver their own sons and daughters. They would only save themselves.

18 Though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they only shall be delivered themselves.

- Again God reiterates that even if Noah, Daniel, Job were present, they would be unable to stop or mitigate this divine judgment. Their righteousness would only be able to save themselves, not even their families.

(d) Noah, Daniel, and Job cannot save land from plague (14:19-20)

19 Or *if* I were to send a plague against that country and pour out My wrath on it in blood to eliminate man and animal from it,

19 Or *if* I should send a plague against that country and pour out My wrath in blood on it to cut off man and beast from it,

19 "Or if I were to send a pestilence against that land and pour out my anger in it with bloodshed, destroying both man and beast in it,

**19** Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast:

- The fourth type of judgment God planned for His people was pestilence

20 even *though* Noah, Daniel, and Job were in its midst, as I live," declares the Lord GOD, "they could not save either *their* son or *their* daughter. They would save only themselves by their righteousness."

20 even *though* Noah, Daniel and Job were in its midst, as I live," declares the Lord GOD, "they could not deliver either *their* son or *their* daughter. They would deliver only themselves by their righteousness."

20 even though Noah, Daniel, and Job were among them, as I live" says the Lord GOD, "they couldn't save their own sons or daughters. They would only save their own souls due to their own righteousness."

20 Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.

- And again, if God poured His wrath upon the land, the presence of Noah, Daniel, and Job would have no effect on His judgment. They would only be able to deliver themselves, not even their immediate families and certainly not the nation as a whole.

### **Uselessness of Intercession**

After this prophecy from God to Ezekiel, it is clear that the nation of Judah could not rely on the righteousness of others to avoid the judgment of God. Ezekiel's focus here was that Jerusalem was not going to be spared, and that even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were there, they would be saved but not those around them. *The thrust of this passage was that*

*Jerusalem was NOT going to be spared.* Noah, Daniel, and Job were specified in particular as having been saved from overwhelming calamities for their personal righteousness. It is interesting to contrast the judgments here with the judgments of Sodom and Gomorrah in Gen 18. Abraham asked God if there were 10 righteous there, would He spare the city. Ten were not found. One was Lot. Lot had to get out of there first, before the city was destroyed. God preserved Lot before judging. In fact, the angels pointed out that they could not even produce the judgment until Lot got out of there. Getting the righteous man out was a condition for the judgment to go forth.

The intercession of even the holiest of men cannot avert God's judgments:

1. Noah, though a righteous man, could not by his intercession have preserved the old world from being drowned.
2. Job, though a righteous man, could not preserve his children from being killed by the fall of their house.
3. Daniel, though a righteous man, could not prevent the captivity of his country. The holiness of any man can only avail for himself.

Though Noah, Daniel, and Job united to plead for Jerusalem, their intercession would be all in vain:

1. This was contrary to expectation. There is power in intercession; there is a special power in the intercession of a "righteous man" (James 5:16); there is a still greater power in united prayer (Matt 18:20). Yet, here the union of three of the very best men, selected from all ages, could not secure the safety of Jerusalem. Though Noah, Daniel, and Job united to plead for Jerusalem, their intercession would be all in vain.
2. The cause of the predicted failure of such an intercession was hardened impenitence. God is more anxious to save than we are to plead for salvation. But it would be unjust and injurious to spare the impenitent on *any* plea. He sent his Son to save the world, an infinitely greater act than the most impassioned pleading of the best men. Therefore the failure cannot be attributed to His hardness.
3. The intercession of Christ succeeds where that of the best men fails. Yet Christ shed tears over Jerusalem, and Jerusalem perished. Why? His prayers are worth those of ten thousand Noahs and Daniels and Jobs. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us," and he alone, bearing the weight of the whole world's guilt, makes atonement for the sins of all men with ample sufficiency. *If they're penitent!*

(ii) God will bring famine, beasts, sword, and plague upon Israel (14:21-23)

**21** For this is what the Lord GOD says: "How much more when I send **My four severe judgments** against Jerusalem: sword, famine, vicious animals, and plague to eliminate human and animal *life* from it!

**21** For thus says the Lord GOD, "How much more when I send My four severe judgments against Jerusalem: sword, famine, wild beasts and plague to cut off man and beast from it!

**21** This is what the Lord GOD says, "I'm sending four of my most destructive judgments—military invasion, famine, wild animals, and pestilence—into Jerusalem to destroy both human beings and livestock in it.

**21** For thus saith the Lord GOD; How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast?

- "...My four severe judgments" - famine (v13-14); wild beasts (v15-16); the sword (v17-18) and pestilence (v19-20)

— These judgments would come upon Israel as a result of persistent disobedience to the Mosaic Law (Cf. Lev 26:22-26)

### **The Four Severe Judgments (Summary)**

Notice the architecture: Sword, Famine, Wild Beasts, and Plague (Cf. Rev 6: Sword, Famine, Wild Beasts, and Plague). Whether Israel reaped God's blessings, or His Four Sore Judgments, was entirely up to them. It was their choice. They had been given truthful warnings up front:

- Lev 26:1-2,14-15,17 - In v17, "slain" = sword
- Lev 26:20 - "land shall not increase" = famine
- Lev 26:22 - wild beasts
- Lev 26:25 - plague

These same four idioms are prophesied as God's wrath in several other passages (Cf. Lev 26:21-28; Num 11:33; 16:46; 25:8-11; Deut 11:17; 28:20-26; 32:22-25; Jer 15:1-9; 16:4-11; 19:7-9; Ezek 5:11-17; 6:11-12; 7:3-15). The parallelism of idioms in Scripture are very intentional, engineered to catch our attention so that we cannot miss the real Author of these Words.

**22** Yet, behold, survivors will be left in it who will be brought out, *both* sons and daughters. Behold, they are going to come out to you, and you will see their conduct and actions; then you will be comforted for the disaster which I have brought against Jerusalem for everything which I have brought upon it.

**22** Yet, behold, survivors will be left in it who will be brought out, *both* sons and daughters. Behold, they are going to come forth to you and you will see their conduct and actions;

then you will be comforted for the calamity which I have brought against Jerusalem for everything which I have brought upon it.

22 But look! There will be a remnant who escapes, a few sons and daughters to be brought out. Look! They'll come out to you and you'll see how they've lived and what they've done, and you'll be comforted concerning the catastrophe that I brought on Jerusalem, including everything that I brought against her.

22 Yet, behold, therein shall be left a remnant that shall be brought forth, both sons and daughters: behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way and their doings: and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, even concerning all that I have brought upon it.

- God made an important promise here...not everyone in Jerusalem would be wiped out by these four methods of judgment, however the mention of these survivors does not provide insight into their spiritual condition

- Thus, the "remnant" described here should not be confused with the concept of the believing remnant. Rather, the term refers to the surviving but unrighteous remnant.

- God had a specific purpose for allowing them to escape judgment. They would be taken into exile in Babylon alongside those already in captivity. When they joined the Jewish exiles from the first and second deportations, they would teach those already in captivity a very important lesson about divine judgment (v23).

23 Then they will comfort you when you see their conduct and actions, for you will know that I have not done without reason whatever I did to it," declares the Lord GOD.

23 Then they will comfort you when you see their conduct and actions, for you will know that I have not done in vain whatever I did to it," declares the Lord GOD.

23 They'll comfort you when you see how they've lived and what they've done, because you'll know for certain that I haven't done anything that I've done against them without any reason," declares the Lord GOD.

23 And they shall comfort you, when ye see their ways and their doings: and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord GOD.

- After the final siege and total destruction of Jerusalem, this unbelieving remnant would be taken captive in Babylon with those other Israelites from the 1st and 2nd sieges/deportations

- The exiles already residing in Babylon would see the idolatrous wickedness of these new arrivals, which would give them comfort in understanding that God's judgment on Jerusalem was justified. Thus, God's harsh judgment would be vindicated.