

9. God who knows all things

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Together God's sovereignty and man's free will is one of the most mind-boggling subjects in the Christian doctrines that drives many theologians to exhaust their words and thoughts. Yet they still argue with one another even though their opinions are finite. It is no wonder that we cannot comprehend the infinite God .

It is typical thinking on our part to say: "If God knew what he was going to do, why did the Lord even allow that man to come to that point in the first place?" Or "If the Lord knew that satan was going to revolt against Him, why did He allow satan to come to existence in the beginning?"

I believe that the Lord allows humans and angels to make their own decisions. And their decisions and actions will bring forth their rewards and consequences. But the Lord knew all of them before the beginning of time existed and He uses whatever the decisions and actions they make for His purposes and for His glory .

In chapter 24-26, the Lord deals with 6 different kingdoms for their own actions – Judah, Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, and Tyre. One thing in common – they all have sinned against the Lord and they needed to be judged by Him. However, Judah didn't get punished and discarded like the rest, but it was getting the corrective judgment that would straighten out the people of Judah once and for all because they were His chosen people.

A. THE COOKING POT

Ezekiel 24:11-13 "Then set the pot empty on the coals, That it may become hot and its bronze may burn, That its filthiness may be melted in it, That its scum may be consumed. 12 She has grown weary with lies, And her great scum has not gone from her. Let her scum be in the fire! 13 In your filthiness is lewdness. Because I have cleansed you, and you were not cleansed, You will not be cleansed of your filthiness anymore, Till I have caused My fury to rest upon you.

You may remember what the corrupt and ungodly Jewish leaders boasted in chapter 11:

Ezekiel 11:2-3 And He said to me: "Son of man, these are the men who devise iniquity and give wicked counsel in this city, 3 who say, 'The time is not near to build houses; this city is the caldron, and we are the meat.'

They claimed that the Jerusalem Jews were the choice of meat, while the Jews in Babylon were only the scraps. Of course, God contradicted that idea and made it clear that the exiles in Babylon would form a remnant with which He could rebuild the nation and the temple.

Ezekiel used the image and vocabulary of the Jerusalem leaders as self-considered choice meat and Jerusalem as the cooking pot. But the Lord tells Ezekiel that He would not cook the meat; rather He would burn it including the pot since Jerusalem was an evil city, filled with sin like a filthy pot encrusted with scum and rust.

Contrary to their thought that they would not be punished by God because of their special status with God, He would punish them because they are His chosen people.

Hebrews 12:7-8 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without

chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

Both prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel had to deal with the false confidence of the people, a confidence based on a false interpretation of theology. Any theology that makes sin easy and divine punishment unimportant is not biblical theology.

Our world today lives on delusions and myths because, like the Jews in Ezekiel's day, the world won't accept the authority of the Word of God. People still believe that power makes right, that money is the measure of worth and success, that the aim of life is to have fun and do what they want to do.

They think that whatever they please about God, themselves, and others, and everything will turn out fine because there are no consequences. But one day God will expose the stupidity of these delusions and the world will discover too late that there are consequences to what they believe and how they behave.

B. GOD JUDGES THE NEIGHBORING KINGDOMS

It must be in human wicked nature. When a person or a country is doing well, others either envy or hate that person or the country. We ought to know. Just about every country around the world used to envy or hate the USA. Now they laugh at the downward trend of our country and the president we are stuck with.

The destruction of Jerusalem was welcomed by the neighboring Gentile nations. During the great days of their nation, the Jews had been a separated people, and this irritated their neighbors. The Jewish people's claim that Jehovah was the only true and living God meant that the other nations worshiped only dead idols. Both Saul and David had met many of these nations on the battlefield, and the Gentiles remembered and resented those humiliating defeats.

But as the kingdom of Judah drifted from the Lord, the Jewish people adopted the gods and the practices of the Gentiles, and to their neighbors, this looked like pure hypocrisy. After all, if Jehovah is the true and living God, why do the Jews need their pagan gods? And why would the kings of Judah look to human allies for protection if Jehovah is able to care for them? Nothing pleased the Gentiles more than to be able to laugh at the Jews in their day of humiliation and claim that the gods of the Babylonians were stronger than the God the Jews worshiped.

From chapter 25-32, we will find that God judges the neighboring kingdoms around Judah and Israel for their cruel actions toward them. They didn't realize what God promises, He keeps:

Genesis 12:3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

What these kingdoms didn't consider was that the destruction of Jerusalem wasn't just a punishment of the Jews; it was also a warning to the Gentiles.

Proverbs 11:31 If the righteous will be recompensed on the earth, How much more the ungodly and the sinner.

1 Peter 4:17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

There is a tremendous difference between a loving parent chastening a child and a judge punishing a guilty criminal.

By the time we get to the end of chapter 32, you will say, "What about Babylon? How come the Lord did not say anything against Babylon?" Actually, He did through Isaiah and Jeremiah.

1) Against Ammon – Ezekiel 25:1-7

The Ammonites had breathed a sigh of relief when the Babylonian army was heading to Judah instead of their land. And they had been joyful when they saw Jerusalem ruined and the temple desecrated, but now their time had come. God would destroy Ammon and the nation would perish from the earth forever.

2) Against Moab – Ezekiel 25:8-11

Remember Balaam the 'prophet-for-hire' who was rebuked by a donkey in the Book of Numbers? It was Balak, king of Moab hired him to curse Israel as they camped on the plains of Moab. Since Balaam couldn't curse the Israelites, he taught the Moabites how to seduce Israel into sinning against God.

The Moabites thought that their nation was impregnable according to Isaiah 16 because their place was located in the high mountains. But the Lord allowed the Assyrians to invade and destroyed them. Today Moab is no longer remembered among the nations.

3) Against Edom – Ezekiel 25:12-14

Edom's hatred of the Jews began when Esau foolishly sold his birthright to his brother Jacob, and when their mother schemed to secure the patriarchal blessing for her favorite son Jacob.

When Jerusalem was being attacked, the Edomites cheered for the Babylonians and gave no help to the Jewish refugees who were trying to escape. Instead, the Edomites helped the Babylonians capture the fleeing people and rejoiced over the terrible calamities that had come to the Jews.

Along with the Babylonians, they looted the city and robbed their own blood relatives. Sins against humanity are sins against God, because humans are made in the image of God. The day came when Edom felt the heavy hand of God's judgment.

4) Against Philistia – Ezekiel 25:15-17

After the Israelites entered and occupied the land of Canaan, the neighboring Philistines became serious enemies. It was David who finally defeated the Philistines, and they were kept under control throughout the reign of Solomon. When the Jewish nation was divided, the Philistines asserted their independence and became successful merchants and traders along with the Phoenicians.

Have you ever wondered what the connection between Philistine and Palestine is? Although the name 'Palestine' is derived from the Philistines, there is no relationship. Philistines were not Arabs but were Greek descendants.

5) Against Tyre – Ezekiel 26

Ezekiel 26:7-14 "For thus says the Lord God: 'Behold, I will bring against Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses,

with chariots, and with horsemen, and an army with many people. 8 He will slay with the sword your daughter villages in the fields; he will heap up a siege mound against you, build a wall against you, and raise a defense against you. 9 He will direct his battering rams against your walls, and with his axes he will break down your towers. 10 Because of the abundance of his horses, their dust will cover you; your walls will shake at the noise of the horsemen, the wagons, and the chariots, when he enters your gates, as men enter a city that has been breached. 11 With the hooves of his horses he will trample all your streets; he will slay your people by the sword, and your strong pillars will fall to the ground. 12 They will plunder your riches and pillage your merchandise; they will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses; they will lay your stones, your timber, and your soil in the midst of the water. 13 I will put an end to the sound of your songs, and the sound of your harps shall be heard no more. 14 I will make you like the top of a rock; you shall be a place for spreading nets, and you shall never be rebuilt, for I the Lord have spoken,' says the Lord God.

Tyre and Israel were in competition with commerce. Any import and export merchant who wanted to go to Europe had to go by Tyre while those who wanted to go Egypt had to go through Israel.

During their reigns, both king David and Solomon were friendly with king Hiram of Tyre. But later God was angry at Tyre for rejoicing at Jerusalem's destruction and seeing it as an opportunity for Tyre to prosper even more.

This prophecy against Tyre is one of the most incredibly detailed and accurate prophecies in the Bible. Nebuchadnezzar besieged the coastal city of Tyre for fifteen years – 586-571 B.C. and overcame it, but he did not conquer the island city. In 322 B.C., Alexander the Great besieged Tyre for seven months, built a causeway that was about 800 yards long to the island out of the rubble from the old Tyre city and was able to conquer the city.

Some would say, "How do you know that this invasion was done by Alexander the Great? The Bible does not say his name." No, it doesn't. Please notice the pronouns from v7 to v11. Everything is 'he' which points to king Nebuchadnezzar. But from v12, the pronoun changed to 'they'.

According to the history of Alexander the Great, he was able to have 223 ships from several kingdoms which wanted to join Alexander in the conquest of Tyre under his commands. With the causeway and naval force, he penetrated their wall and conquered the island.

Since the name "Tyre" means "rock," so the statement "like the top of a rock" in v14 is significant. Tyre did become a bare rock and a place where fishermen dried their nets just as the Scriptures stated.

C. APPLICATIONS

1) Any theology that makes sin easy and divine punishment unimportant is not biblical theology.

2) Unconfessed hidden sin will eventually bite the sinner. God will make sure of that.