

Ezekiel 22 – When a Nation Forgets God, and the God Who Still Seeks a Man in the Gap

1. Why Judgment? The “Bloody City” Exposed (Ezekiel 22:1-12)

“Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying: ‘Now, son of man, will you judge, will you judge the bloody city? Yes, show her all her abominations.’” (Ezekiel 22:1-2, NKJV)

Jerusalem is called “the bloody city.” God is not striking at random; He lists the reasons for His judgment so no one can say He has been unfair.

The Charges God Brings

In Ezekiel 22:3-12, the Lord exposes layer after layer of sin:

- **Bloodshed and violence** – “You have become guilty by the blood which you have shed” (Ezekiel 22:4, NKJV).
Murder has become normal in the city, even within its leadership.
- **Idolatry** – “You have defiled yourself with the idols which you have made” (Ezekiel 22:4, NKJV).
They worship false gods and even offer their own children as sacrifices.
- **Contempt for family and the vulnerable** – They dishonor father and mother, oppress the stranger, mistreat the fatherless and the widow (Ezekiel 22:7).
- **Despising holy things** – “You have despised My holy things and profaned My Sabbaths” (Ezekiel 22:8, NKJV).
What God calls holy, they treat as cheap and common.
- **Sexual sin and broken boundaries** –
Incest, adultery, and exploitation are described bluntly (Ezekiel 22:10-11). What God clearly forbade has become accepted behavior.
- **Corrupt money and power** –
 - Taking bribes to shed blood (murder for hire).
 - Charging oppressive interest and using extortion (Ezekiel 22:12).
 - Doing whatever it takes to get ahead, no matter who gets crushed.

God sums it up with one cutting statement:

“...you have forgotten Me,” says the Lord God. (Ezekiel 22:12, NKJV)

That is the root of it all. When a people forget God, their moral compass collapses. Once God is pushed out of the mind and conscience, anything becomes negotiable.

2. When God's Hand Strikes Dishonest Gain (Ezekiel 22:13-16)

"Behold, therefore, I beat My fists at the dishonest profit which you have made, and at the bloodshed which has been in your midst." (Ezekiel 22:13, NKJV)

God "beats His fists" at their crooked gain—He is not indifferent to oppression, corruption, and violence. He asks them:

"Can your heart endure, or can your hands remain strong, in the days when I shall deal with you?" (Ezekiel 22:14, NKJV)

They thought they were strong. They thought their systems, alliances, and wealth would protect them. God says, "When I step in, you will see how weak you really are."

He warns that He will scatter them among the nations and let them eat the bitter fruit of their own choices (Ezekiel 22:15-16). And once again we see His purpose:

"...and you shall know that I am the Lord." (Ezekiel 22:16, NKJV)

Even in judgment, God's goal is that people wake up and recognize Him.

3. Melted Like Dross in the Furnace (Ezekiel 22:17-22)

God then uses a powerful picture from metallurgy:

"Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to Me; they are all bronze, tin, iron, and lead, in the midst of a furnace; they have become dross from silver." (Ezekiel 22:18, NKJV)

"Dross" is the impurity and waste skimmed off when silver is refined. God says the nation has become like the junk metal in the furnace—corrupted, polluted, unusable as they are.

He says He will gather them in Jerusalem like metal in a crucible and blow on them with the fire of His wrath:

"As silver is melted in the midst of a furnace, so shall you be melted in its midst; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have poured out My fury on you." (Ezekiel 22:22, NKJV)

This is not mindless rage. It is refining judgment. God is exposing and burning away the filth they refuse to repent of.

4. Corruption from Top to Bottom (Ezekiel 22:23-29)

God then goes group by group through the entire society:

Prophets – Spiritual Voices Gone Wrong

"There is a conspiracy of her prophets in her midst, like a roaring lion tearing the prey... they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in her midst." (Ezekiel 22:25, NKJV)

The very people who should speak truth are devouring the flock. They use their spiritual position to gain wealth and power, not to care for souls.

Priests – No Difference Between Holy and Unholy

“Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy... and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them.” (Ezekiel 22:26, NKJV)

They no longer teach the difference between clean and unclean, right and wrong. God’s name is dragged down by the very ones who claim to represent Him.

Princes – Leaders Like Wolves

“Her princes in her midst are like wolves tearing the prey, to shed blood, to destroy people, and to get dishonest gain.” (Ezekiel 22:27, NKJV)

Those in power—who should protect justice—use their position to exploit and enrich themselves.

Prophets Again – Covering Sin with Lies

“Her prophets plastered them with untempered mortar, seeing false visions, and divining lies for them, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord God,’ when the Lord had not spoken.” (Ezekiel 22:28, NKJV)

Instead of calling sin what it is, they “paint over” the cracks with religious talk. They claim, “God said,” when He has not said. They soothe people when they ought to call them to repentance.

People of the Land – Everyday Life Corrupted

“The people of the land have used oppressions, committed robbery, and mistreated the poor and needy; and they wrongfully oppress the stranger.” (Ezekiel 22:29, NKJV)

The sin is not only at the top. The whole atmosphere of society is infected: injustice, greed, indifference to the poor, abuse of outsiders.

This is what happens when a nation forgets God. It eventually shows up everywhere—from the pulpit to the palace to the marketplace.

5. “I Sought for a Man... But I Found No One” (Ezekiel 22:30-31)

At this point, we might expect God simply to say, “Enough.” But we read something astonishing:

“So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.” (Ezekiel 22:30, NKJV)

God was looking for one man:

- who would “make a wall” – rebuild a spiritual barrier of truth and righteousness,
- who would “stand in the gap” – intercede, plead, and call the people back,
- who would stand “before Me... on behalf of the land.”

But in that generation, God found no one willing and able to stand in that place.

So the chapter ends:

“Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads,” says the Lord God. (Ezekiel 22:31, NKJV)

Judgment fell, and they tasted the consequences of their own ways.

6. The One Who Truly Stands in the Gap

Ezekiel 22 leaves us with a haunting question:

Where is the man who will stand in the gap?

In human history, leaders, prophets, and priests have all failed in various ways. But God did not abandon His purpose. In the fullness of time, He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, who did what no one else could:

- He lived a perfectly righteous life—no dross, no corruption, no sin.
- He stood in the gap between a holy God and sinful humanity.
- He offered Himself on the cross, shedding His blood to pay for our sins and reconcile us to God.
- He was buried, and on the third day He rose again, and His resurrection declares that He is God, Savior, and Lord.

On the cross, Jesus bore the judgment we deserve. In Him, God’s justice and God’s mercy meet. The sword that should have fallen on us fell on Him. Now the door is open—not just for a nation, but for every person who will turn and trust Him.

7. Practical Application for Believers

Ezekiel 22 is not just ancient history; it is a mirror.

a) Guard Your Heart from “Forgetting God”

Israel’s violence, idolatry, and immorality flowed from one root: “you have forgotten Me.” (Ezekiel 22:12, NKJV)

For us:

- Are we letting busyness, comfort, or success push God to the margins?
- Are we more shaped by the culture’s values than by God’s Word?
- Do we treat His truth, His day, and His presence as optional extras instead of central realities?

When we forget God, compromises follow.

b) Take Holiness Seriously in Private and Public

God cares about:

- how we treat family,
- how we handle money,
- how we respond to the poor and the outsider,
- how we handle our bodies and sexuality,
- how we speak in God's name.

Holiness is not limited to “religious” activities; it touches every part of life. Jesus did not shed His blood so we could keep living in the same sin that crucified Him. He died and rose again so we could be forgiven, cleansed, and transformed.

c) Refuse to Be Numbed by the Culture

Ezekiel's generation had normalized things God called abominations. Our world does the same.

- We are tempted to laugh at what God mourns,
- excuse what God calls sin,
- and stay silent where God calls us to speak truth in love.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to be different—not self-righteous or harsh, but holy, honest, and compassionate.

d) Stand in the Gap

God is still looking for men and women who will:

- Pray for their families, churches, communities, and nation.
- Speak truth with humility and courage.
- Live in such a way that others see the difference Jesus makes.

You and I cannot do what only Christ could do on the cross. But, because He stood in the gap to save us, we can now stand in the gap in prayer, obedience, and loving witness.

A Challenge for Believers

If you belong to Jesus, Ezekiel 22 challenges you:

- Are you willing to let God search your heart for hidden “dross”—compromise, secret sin, hardness, or indifference?
- Are you willing to let Him refine you, even if it feels like a furnace at times?
- Are you willing to stand in the gap—for your family, your church, and your city—when many are spiritually asleep?

You might pray:

“Lord, I do not want to forget You. I ask You to show me any area where I have compromised, grown cold, or hardened my heart. Cleanse me by the blood of Jesus. Fill me with Your Spirit. Make me someone who stands in the gap in prayer, love, and truth. Use my life as a witness of Your grace in a generation that has largely forgotten You.”

An Invitation to Non-Believers

Ezekiel 22 shows us what happens when people push God away and refuse His voice. But God’s heart is not to destroy; His heart is to save. He has already proven that by sending His Son.

Jesus:

- Shed His blood on the cross to pay for your sins.
- Rose from the dead, and His resurrection declares that He is God, Savior, and Lord.
- Stands now as the One who bridges the gap between a holy God and a guilty world.

You do not have to face God’s judgment alone. You do not have to carry your guilt and shame. You do not have to keep living far from the God who made you and loves you.

Today, you can turn to Jesus, trusting Him as your Savior and surrendering to Him as your Lord.

You might say:

“God, I admit that I have sinned and that I have often lived as if You were not there. I do not want to forget You any longer. I believe that Jesus died on the cross for my sins and that He rose again. I believe He is God, Savior, and Lord. I turn from my sin and ask You to forgive me, cleanse me, and make me new. I give my life to Jesus and ask You to lead me from this day forward.”

If you truly call on Him, He will hear you.

Because of the cross and the empty tomb, the Man who stands in the gap is ready to receive you today.