

---

## **SUNDAY SERMON**

**Hidden Hills Sovereign Grace Baptist Church**

**Willow, Alaska**

**Date: July 02, 2017**

**Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 15:01-08**

**Text: Ezekiel 15:01-08**

**Subject: EZEKIEL SERIES – A review and the vine tree**

The LORD has seen good to forbid my preaching to the saints in this body since December 4, 2016. This preacher has been physically sick in body for several long months and has undergone two heart ablations and a series of medication changes. Now, it seems the LORD has been pleased to allow me once again to preach His word. I have been in prayerful, eager anticipation till now.

Since it has been so many weeks since I last spoke to you from Ezekiel's prophecy, it seems good to do a brief review of what we have studied thus far in this marvelous book. Before doing the review of the book, let me refresh our memories about the history of Israel and Judah. As you know, Saul was Israel's first king and reigned over Israel for 40 years. The LORD raised up David in Saul's room and David reigned over Judah and Israel 40 years – seven years at Hebron over Judah and thirty-three years in Jerusalem over Israel.

**2 Samuel 5:4-5** *David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. 5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.*

The LORD raised up Solomon, David's son by Bathsheba, to be king over

Israel and Solomon reigned over Israel forty (40) years (1 Kings 11:42). Because Israel forsook the LORD and worshipped idols during the days of Solomon, the Lord prophesied that he would divide the kingdom, but not in the days of Solomon, but in the days of Solomon's son.

**1 Kings 11:9-13** *And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, **10** And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded. **11** Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. **12** Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. **13** Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.*

Therefore, in the days of Rehoboam, Solomon's son, king of Israel, the Lord rent the kingdom into two parts. Two tribes remained at or near the capital at Jerusalem – Judah and Benjamin and was called Judah, while ten tribes were given to Jeroboam, son of Nebat, king of Israel. The capital of this northern kingdom was in Samaria and was called Israel and sometimes Ephraim. Thus, the nation was divided. This division occurred about 975 B. C. 235 years later in 740 B. C., Shalmaneser, king of Assyria besieged Samaria and took the north kingdom of Israel captive and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozen, and in the cities of the Medes. They remain scattered to this day. (2 Kings 17:1-18).

Judah and Benjamin (called Judah) remained in the land until 600 to 588 B. C., when Jerusalem was besieged and Judah was carried away captive into Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar where they would remain for seventy-years (70 years) according to the LORD's pronouncement. The prophet Ezekiel was one of those carried away to Babylon and his prophecy was written in that land during the 70 years of captivity. In his prophecy, thus far, we have seen:

- In chapter 1, Ezekiel's vision of the glory of the LORD in the land of the Chaldeans (Babylonians) by the River Chebar.
- In chapter 2, Ezekiel was filled with the Spirit and commissioned of God to prophesy to the children of Israel. Moreover, the LORD caused him to eat a book – a roll (or scroll) in which was written within and without lamentations, and mourning, and woe
- In chapter 3, the prophet said of the eating of the scroll, "Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness." (3:3). The LORD tells Ezekiel that he is not sent to a people of a strange speech and a hard language, but to the house of Israel. He also told Ezekiel that Israel would not harken to him – yet had he been sent to a people of a strange speech and hard language, they would have heard him. God gave the prophet a forehead as an adamant harder than flint so that he should not be dismayed at their looks. Then Ezekiel was filled with the Spirit. God sent him to the plain and told Ezekiel to put on bands and go out to the nation. Moreover, he told him that he had made Ezekiel's tongue to cling to the roof of his mouth and he would be dumb and unable to speak.
- In chapter 4, Ezekiel, following the LORD's instructions, portrays

the city of Jerusalem on a tile. Then he lay on his left side for three hundred and ninety days to “bear the iniquity of the house of Israel” while he cooked his bread of wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and fitches with cows’ dung. He ate his bread by measure – twenty shekels each day and his water with no more than a sixth part of an hin. Then he turned to his right side and lay forty more days. The LORD laid bands on him so that he could not turn. This was a testimony to the children of Israel.

**Ezekiel 4:16-17** Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment: **17** That they may want bread and water, and be astonished one with another, and consume away for their iniquity.

In chapter 5, the LORD instructed Ezekiel to take him a sharp knife – a barber’s razor, and cause it to pass upon his head and upon his beard. Then he was to take balances to weigh, and divide the hair. He was to burn a third, smite a third with a knife, and scatter a third part by the wind. This was a sign to Israel of how the LORD would judge them – part with fire, part with the sword, and part by scattering them.

Chapters 6 & 7 is a message to the mountains of Israel that God would make them desolate and break down their idols. How those judged of the LORD would mourn!

**Ezekiel 7:15-20** The sword *is* without, and the pestilence and the famine within: he that *is* in the field shall die with the sword; and he that *is* in the city, famine and pestilence

shall devour him. **16** But they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, every one for his iniquity. **17** All hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak as water. **18** They shall also gird *themselves* with sackcloth, and horror shall cover them; and shame *shall be* upon all faces, and baldness upon all their heads. **19** They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed: their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD: they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels: because it is the stumblingblock of their iniquity. **20** As for the beauty of his ornament, he set it in majesty: but they made the images of their abominations *and* of their detestable things therein: therefore have I set it far from them.

Chapter 8 is an enumeration of the wickedness and sins done by the children of Israel with the LORD's being justified in judging them. The ancients of Israel had portrayed all manner of creeping things and abdominal beasts, and idols on the wall and were bowing down to them with incense. The women were weeping for Tammuz, a heathen idol! Twenty five men in the temple were seen bowing themselves to worship the sun!

**Ezekiel 8:17-18** Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen *this*, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose. **18** Therefore will I also deal in fury:

mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.

In chapter 9, the LORD called for those who had charge over the city to draw near, every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. They came. Then one among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brazen altar. "And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side."

**Ezekiel 9:4-7** *And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. 5 And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: 6 Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house. 7 And he said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city.*

Chapter 10 gave us a description of the man clothed with linen, who was instructed of the LORD to "Go in between the wheels, even under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubims, and scatter them over the city. And he

went in in my sight.” (10:2). This is a precursor of judgment. Too, this chapter gave us the account of the glory of the LORD departing from off the house.

**Ezekiel 10:4** Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, *and stood* over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD'S glory.

**Ezekiel 10:18-19** Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims. **19** And the cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight: when they went out, the wheels also *were* beside them, and *every one* stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD'S house; and the glory of the God of Israel *was* over them above.

Chapter 11 brought us the judgment of God on the lying princes of Jerusalem. Too, we saw the departure of the glory of the Lord from the midst of the city. The glory of the LORD would not again be mentioned until the completion of the millennial temple in chapter 42.

**Ezekiel 11:23** *And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.*

Chapter 12 finds Ezekiel preparing stuff for removing and then digs through the wall and comes out in the sight of Israel in the twilight with his head covered as a sign to the house of Israel.

In this chapter, we read that the full captivity is near at hand.

Chapter 13 is the message against the lying prophets in Israel and a pronouncement of judgment against them.

Chapter 14 is a vision of the elders of Israel who set up his idols in his heart and put the stumblingblock of his iniquity before the people. God would answer him to his face. To show the sovereignty of God in all this, we read this verse:

**Ezekiel 14:9** *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.*

Jerusalem would not be spared, but would be judged and destroyed.

**Ezekiel 15:1-8** *And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 2 Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest? 3 Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? 4 Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for any work? 5 Behold, when it was whole, it was meet for no work: how much less shall it be meet yet for any work, when the fire hath devoured it, and it is*



**burned?**

**Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree, --**

The vine ... - The image of the vine is clearly seen in these passages. [Ps 80:8](#); Isa. 5.

**Psalm 80:8** *Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.*

**Isaiah 5:1-7** *Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: **2** And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. **3** And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. **4** What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? **5** And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: **6** And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. **7** For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.*

In verses 1-3 of this 15<sup>th</sup> chapter, the comparison is not between the vine and other trees, but between the wood of the vine and the wood of other trees. The vine is useful insofar as it produces fruit, but the wood itself is useless. Reminds us of our standing in this present world as God's children. We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. The fruit which we bear is not of us, but of the Holy Ghost!

The vine tree in the forest is a tree out of place. It belongs in the vineyard. Like a professed believer whose place is in the world because he loves the world, and the things of the world. How much more useless shall the vine tree be when it is burned with fire?

***6 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; As the vine tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 7 And I will set my face against them; they shall go out from one fire, and another fire shall devour them; and ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I set my face against them. 8 And I will make the land desolate, because they have committed a trespass, saith the Lord GOD.***

The LORD God, because of Judah's lack of bearing fruit has judgment pronounced upon them. As he gives the vine tree of the forest to fire for fuel, so will he give the inhabitants of Jerusalem. How horrible when God's face is against those who profess to be his! They, like us when we turn away, need to seek God's face! We need to submit ourselves wholly to him and

not grieve the Holy Spirit or quench the Spirit. It is the Spirit that works in us to bring forth fruit!

**John 15:16** *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

And the fruit is not of our own doing, but is produced by the Holy Ghost working in us as the passive vine.

**John 15:1-8** *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

What, exactly is the fruit which the Holy Ghost produces in those branches which are in the vine, which is Jesus Christ? What are those qualities which the Holy Ghost brings forth in us?

**Galatians 5:22-23** But the fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance**: against such there is no law.

Are you and I bearing fruit?

- Are we filled with the kind of **love** that flows from our will toward others – that allows us to love the unloveable?
- Are we filled with the **joy** of the LORD in spite of the outward circumstances?
- Do we have the **peace** of God that passes all understanding even in the midst of trials and trouble?
- Do we exhibit **longsuffering**? Do we bear long with others when they cause us to chafe?
- Are we characterized by **gentleness**? Do we have softness of manners; mildness of temper; sweetness of disposition; display meekness?
- Is **goodness** in us? Is it shown to others? Goodness is kindness; benevolence; compassion of heart in true feelings for the plight of others; but more generally, acts of kindness; charity. Goodness is a disposition in us to hurt none, but to do all the good we can to all.
- **Faith**? All believers have saving faith, but this suggests faithfulness. This is truth in words, faithfulness in promises, and faithfulness in dealings one with another.

- **Meekness.** Kind to gentleness, but more. Softness of temper; mildness; gentleness; forbearance under injuries and provocations. Such was the savior to a degree that each who love him desire to be like him in meekness.
- Do we display **Temperance**? Patience; calmness; sedateness; moderation of passion. Not a glutton or winebibber, but moderate in appetite.

Surely, you and I can see clearly whether these things are a part of our life or no! Let us not grieve the Spirit in failing to bear fruit so that we might be cast forth as a branch and be withered – where men gather them and cast them into the fire. Let us, beloved, in all of our ways imitate our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! God help us!