

Stand in the Gap

Ezekiel 22:30

Introduction

1. The sins that existed among God's people in the O.T. are common to every generation.
2. As we consider the similarities between Ezekiel's day and today we are also able to see the kind of instruction that is needed today, just as it was given back then.
3. Ezek. 22:30 is one passage that stands out to help wake up God's people to take a stand against immorality. Let us consider what God says.

Discussion

I. The Moral Condition of Judah (Ezek. 22:23-29)

- A. 22:25, 28: False prophets
 1. The prophets conspired together.
 2. They determined to preach popular things and not the truth.
 3. Their motivation was money and popularity.
- B. 22:26: Unfaithful priests
 1. The priests were charged with distinguishing between clean and unclean, yet they failed to fulfill their charge.
 2. They were also charged with teaching the people, but they were not teaching.
 3. Instead of upholding God's truth, they "Permitted a state of ambiguity where everything was a shade of gray" (Dunagan, *Stand In The Gap Part I*).
- C. 22:27: Corruption of the rulers
 1. Rather than executing justice, the rulers would seek financial wealth and political gain.
 2. They would accept bribes and oppress those who stood against them.
- D. 22:29: Oppression by the people
 1. The wealthier class of the common people would oppress those who had nothing.
 2. They would steal property from the helpless.
 3. They would oppress the poor and the widows instead of helping them.
 4. The moral condition of the people had reached rock bottom. They were already in Babylonian captivity when Ezekiel was prophesying as a result of their moral depravity.

II. A Man to Stand in the Gap (Ezek. 22:30)

- A. God did not want the people to be destroyed (1 Tim. 2:4).
- B. He sought for a man to stand between Him and the people.
 1. Morality is like a wall that shields people from divine wrath (Dunagan).
 2. When morality flourishes, so does God's mercy.
 3. As morality declines, God's wrath increases. But that is not what the Lord wanted.
 4. He sought for some man to stand in the gap to uphold God's moral standard and to shield the people from wrath, but there was no man in sight.
- C. The same point is made in Jer. 5:1
 1. Run to and fro and seek for a man.
 2. Seek one who will execute judgment.
 3. Seek a man who seeks the truth.
 4. "So that I will pardon her."

5. There was none found in Judah, that is why she was sent into captivity.

III. Stand in the Gap Today

- A. We are faced with the same moral challenges today that existed back then.
 1. Peter's gospel sermon, Acts 2:40, "*Be saved from this perverse generation.*"
 2. Peter's warning for the future, 2 Pet. 2:12-15, "...*having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin...*"
 3. In addition, there are men who claim to preach the word of God who deliberately conspire to avoid preaching God's truth, just as there was in Judah.
 4. 2 Pet. 2:1, "*But there were also false prophets among the people, even as their will be false teachers among you...*"
- B. God is looking for men today to stand in the gap.
 1. Every generation needs a spiritual remnant who will rebuild and uphold the moral and spiritual foundations which popular culture and unfaithful Christians try to tear down.
 2. God is looking for men to roll up their sleeves and to get busy restoring the "old paths" (Jer. 6:16).
- C. Men who stand in the gap.
 1. Men who live by hope in the promises of God (Phil. 4:4-8).
 2. Men who are excited and happy to serve God (Ps. 122:1; 42:1-2).
 3. Men who are unselfish and who are giving and sacrificial (Eph. 5:25; Matt. 20:26-27).
 4. Men who have integrity and virtue (2 Pet. 1:5).
 5. Men who are willing to execute the Lord's judgment without allowing the emotionalism and human wisdom to hinder them.
 - a. Rebuke sin when it needs rebuked.
 - b. Withdraw from those who will not repent.
 - c. Have love enough to build up the weak.
 - d. Preach the truth, whether it is popular or not, "in season and out."
 6. Some today think that they are doing men a favor by giving in, by avoiding issues and neglecting those who need building up, when in fact they are allowing the wall to be torn down.
 7. Therefore we are exhorted by Paul in Eph. 6:10-13, "...*be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*"

Conclusion

1. There is moral decline all around us.
2. Sometimes we don't see the decline as keenly as we should because we are following right behind it, blind to our own decline.
3. But this congregation can stand strong if there are men and women in its membership who are willing to stand in the gap.
4. Are you willing to take a moral stand? To contend for the faith? To draw the line at God's word without compromise? The Lord is looking for you.

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November 25th, 2007