

The Book of Ezekiel
Chapters 15-17: Pictures of Failure
Lesson 15 “The Worthless Vine”
Ezekiel 15:1-8 (ANSWERS)
November 15, 2020

Recap from Lesson 14:

1. **The Lying Prophets (Vss. 1-16)**
 - a. Four times in this paragraph God declares that the false prophets saw vanity (**Nothingness**) and spoke lies.
 - b. They spoke out of their own **Imaginations**, and their **“Inspirations”** was self-induced.
2. **The Lying Sorceresses (Vss. 17-23)**
 - a. The gift of prophecy was **Not** given exclusively to men.
 - i. The Jewish women Ezekiel was **Exposing** were more like sorceresses who claimed to be prophetesses.

“False Piety” (Ezekiel 14:1-11)

1. **He Exposed Their Hidden Sin (Vss. 1-5)**
2. **He Called them to Repent (Vss. 6-11)**
 - a. It is the **Condition** of the person’s heart that **Determines** the response to the Lord’s test, for God deals with people according to their **Hearts**.

Session 15

Background:

- The prophet Ezekiel **Remained** silent except when the Word of the Lord came to him, and God permitted him to speak. (**Ezek. 3:25-27**)
- The three messages recorded in these Chapters (**Ezek. 15-17**) were given to the **Elders** who were seated before him in his own **House**, men who were outwardly appeared **Interested** in hearing God’s word but inwardly were **Idolatrous**. (**Ezek. 14:1-3**)
- The Lord knew that neither the elders nor the people took Ezekiel’s messages seriously because they saw him as a religious **Entertainer** whose words were only beautiful music. (**Ezek. 33:30-33**)
 - Whenever God’s people **Turn** from His Word and become **Satisfied** with substitutes, they are indeed headed for **Failure**.
- In these Three messages, Ezekiel spoke about a **Vine**, an **Unfaithful** Wife, and three **Shots** from a **Tree**, and each of these images conveyed God’s truth to those who really wanted to understand.
 - These pictures and parables not only described the **Sins** of the Nation of Israel, but they also declared her terrible **Judgment**.
 - One more fact should be noted: These Three parables answered the **Complaints** of the people that God had **Rejected** His people and was **Breaking** His own Covenant.

1. **The Worthless Vine (Ezek. 15:1-8)**

- a. The vine is an image found frequently in Scripture. Jesus compared **Himself** to a vine and His **Disciples** to branches in the vine, because we depend **Wholly** on Him for life and fruitfulness. (**Jn. 15**)
 - b. **Rev. 14:17-20**
 - i. This reference speaks of “**The vine of the earth,**” a symbol of **Corrupt** Gentile **Society** at the end of the age. **Ripening** of judgment in the winepress of God’s wrath.
 - c. **Jer. 5:21**
 - i. The image of the vine is often applied to the **Nation of Israel**.
 - d. **Ezek. 17:6-8**
 - i. When you study the references listed above, you learn that Israel was a **Lowly** vine when God planted her in the **Promised Land**, but by His blessing she **Increased** and prospered.
 - ii. During the reign of David and the early years of Solomon, the vine was **Fragrant** and fruitful, a witness to the Gentile nations of the blessing of the God of Israel.
 - 1. However, Solomon introduced idolatry into the nation, the kingdom divided, and the Jewish people began to bear “**Wild grapes,**” instead of fruit for God’s glory. (**Isa. 5:2**)
 - 2. Subsequent kings, both of Israel and Judah, worshipped idols and engaged in the evil practice of the neighboring nations. God allowed the **Gentiles** to **Invade** the land and eventually destroy Jerusalem and the temple. The holy vineyard was **Defiled** and devastated. (**Ps. 80:12-13**)
 - e. Ezekiel’s contribution to the vineyard story is to point out the **Worthlessness** of the vine that does **Not** bear fruit.
 - i. If a tree becomes useless, you can at least cut it down and make something useful out of the wood.
 - ii. It is good for only one thing, and that is fuel for the fire. If the wood was useless **Before** it was thrown into the fire, it is even more worthless **After** it had been singed and marred by the flames.
 - f. The vine was burned at both ends and in the **Middle!** The inhabitants of the Holy City certainly went from the “Fire” of invasion and assault to the literal fire of **Destruction**. (**2 Chron. 36:19**)
 - g. Those of **Us** who are branches in Jesus Christ, the true Vine, need to take this lesson to heart! If we fail to abide in Christ, we **Lose** our spiritual power, wither, and fail to **Bear** fruit for His glory. (**Jn. 15:6; 6:37; Rom. 8:1**)
 - i. The image of the burning branch is that of a worthless life, a life **Useless** to God.
- John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist church, prayed, “Lord, let me not live to be useless!”