

The Mark of the Intercessor.

by Gareth Evans

The sermon explores the vital role of intercessors in the face of God's judgment and the need for a deeper understanding of sin and mercy in the church today.

Scripture: Judges 21:25, Ezekiel 9:4, Ezekiel 22:30, John 4:23, Romans 1:18

Topics: "Intercessory Prayer", "End Times"

Description

Gareth Evans preaches on the mark of the Intercessor, drawing from the vision of Ezekiel in Babylon where God brings judgment upon Jerusalem, starting with His own people. The mark of the Intercessor is placed on those who sigh and groan over the abominations in the land, representing those who intercede for their church and nation. As the man in linen, symbolizing Jesus, brings mercy, the Shekinah glory departs, signifying impending judgment. This message serves as a warning for the present times of growing persecution and the approaching end times.

Transcript

Part Two: The mark of the Intercessor.

Reading: Ezekiel 8-10 especially 9:4: "...and put a mark upon the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in (the city)"

Ezekiel is in captivity in Babylon when he has a vision of the situation 'back home' in Jerusalem. He is taken to the temple where he sees the great evils being done by the elders, the leaders and the women in worshipping false gods and the sun. God is about to bring judgment upon the city and upon its leaders, 'beginning at the sanctuary'. This is always God's way - He starts any cleansing process by dealing with His own people first.

He calls forth six executioners from the gate facing north, and they are given the awful task of destroying every man, woman and child because of the evils done in the city. However, there is also among them, a man clothed in linen with a writing case at his side. To him is given a task of 'grace'. Before the executioners begin, he is to "go through the city, through Jerusalem, and to put a mark upon the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it."

I call this mark the mark of the Intercessor. These represent those today whose hearts are heavy because of the state of the church and the land wherein they live, and are motivated to cry before God on behalf of

their church and nation. The Scriptures teach that God is looking for two peoples - those who worship in spirit and in truth (worshippers - John 4:23), and those who will stand in the gap between men and God (intercessors - Ez.22:30).

I believe that the man in linen represents the Lord Jesus - one sent to bring deliverance to God's faithful people in a time of judgment. It is sure that the early church, being warned of a coming persecution, were aware of this scripture and the promised deliverance for the faithful. There is also a message for us today as we face growing persecution and the times of the end are drawing nearer.

As the man clothed in linen begins his mercy ministry, the Shekinah glory of God removes from the mercy seat and comes outside the temple from where it is soon to depart, never to return until Christ returns. Ezekiel's heart is heavy as the executioners prepare to do their work, for he cannot understand the wrath of God. "Ah, Lord God!" he exclaims, "wilt thou destroy all that remains of Israel in the outpouring of thy wrath upon Jerusalem?"(9:8). Most have already been moved away to captivity; now the remnant are to be destroyed, (except those with the mark on their foreheads).

God answers to show Ezekiel how abominable in His sight, is sin among His own people (9:9). Oh, that we could understand the awfulness of sin among a redeemed people, from God's perspective. Only then can we begin to sigh and groan for our church and nation, as we should. We need another, clearer view of the cross!

The man in linen returns and the executioners are sent out. The time for judgment upon Jerusalem has (prophetically) come. Are we also nearing the time when the wrath of God is about to be revealed on our world in judgment?

This raises another interesting question in my mind. How does a God who is love show His wrath? As I study Romans 1:18- 32, I see 'the wrath of God is revealed from heaven' when He 'gave them up' to their lusts and passions (24, 26,28). He shows His wrath by 'taking His hand off' rather than putting His hand on us. When there is no king in Israel and men do what is right in their own eyes (Judges 21:25), God takes His hand off with the result being great evil, and the fruit of that evil, in the land.

"It is an awful thing to fall into the hands of a living God" said the prophet. I suggest that for the covenant child of God, it is a far more awful thing to find His hand no longer upon us, allowing Satan to do his worst! Will we escape by being 'raptured out' before that time, or will we go through that time, either suffering the tribulation pains, or being kept because He has put a mark on our forehead (figuratively?)

One of the many reasons I have for believing that we are approaching the last days, is the great increase in the numbers of people I meet, who have a burden for intercession. It is evident that the Lord is already preparing His praying, interceding people for the outpouring of His Spirit, promised in Joel 2. These are people who know what it is to wait upon the Lord in prayer, oftentimes in silence and solitude.

They are also the people most in tune with knowing God's heart for the times and places wherein we live. It is through them that God is speaking to church leaders, directing them how to be overcomers in reaching their communities with the Gospel news. Are we recognising the intercessors among us, as we should, and are we hearing God's voice speaking to His church?

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