

# Chaos Until Christ Comes Part 1 Pt. A

Charles Feinberg

Announcer:

This is a message on chaos until Christ comes by Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg, professor of Old Testament and Dean of Talbot Theological Seminary.

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The subject of this message is a very valuable one. It is chaos until Christ comes. I want to direct your attention to the 21st chapter of the prophecy of Ezekiel. Ezekiel chapter 21 beginning to read at verse 24 and reading through verse 27. Ezekiel 21 verses 24-27. Chaos until Christ comes. 24 Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Because ye have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your transgressions are uncovered, so that in all your doings your sins do appear; because, I say, that ye are come to remembrance, ye shall be taken with the hand. 25 And thou, oh deadly wounded wicked one, the prince of Israel whose day has come, in the time of the iniquity of the end, thus saith the Lord God; remove the miter and take off the crown. This shall be no more the same. Exalt that which is low and abase that which is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it. This also shall be no more, until he come whose right it is and I will give it him. Ezekiel Ch. 21 verses 25-27.

The prophet Ezekiel was one of the captivity prophets, as was Jeremiah and Daniel. He is one who saw the kingdom of Judah go into Babylonian captivity. He himself was exiled into

Babylon. We read in his first chapter of his prophecy that he was among the captives by the river Ki bar and it was there that the heavens were opened and he saw visions of God. As a captive, his messages kept warning those yet remaining in the land that judgement would fall upon them as well as upon the exiles if they continued in the same sins which had brought God's judgement upon the northern kingdom in 722-721 BC on the southern kingdom about 605 BC and in the time of Ezekiel's deportation around 597 BC. He's still warning. His messages are largely those of judgment because the people of God, though ripe for judgement continued on and had no desire to change, no concern about heading the warnings of God's true prophets. Ezekiel, like all the prophets of God has the Lord's remedy for the disaster that Israel has brought upon itself. Therefore the passage ultimately will end on a note of hope, of blessing, of ultimate comfort.

There are three striking truths in our passage in Ezekiel 21:24-27 and the first truth is the cause of the judgement. What's the reason for the visitation of God? What's the reason for the warning at this point? Well if you look carefully in this 21st chapter you will see that there are three principle prophecies or three focal points around with prophecies of judgement revolve in this important chapter which has often been called, and rightly so, the chapter on the Lord's sword. Again and again, we read about God drawing his sword, and verse four; my sword. And so you go on especially verse 8, a sword a sword is sharpened and also polished, sharpened that it may make a slaughter. The chapter on the sword. The sword is going to fall first of all upon the whole land of Israel, hear it. In verse two and following. Son of man set thy face toward Jerusalem and drop thy word upon the sanctuaries and prophecy against the land of Israel. And say to the land of Israel, thus saith the Lord I am against thee. Notice he's talking to the whole land of Israel. Verse 2, the land of Israel. Verse 3, the land of Israel. Behold I am against thee and will draw forth my sword out of its sheath and will cut off from thee the righteous and the

wicked. Seeing then that I will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked therefore shall my sword go forth out of its sheath against all flesh, from the south to the north, and all flesh shall know that I the Lord have drawn forth my sword out of its sheath. It shall not return anymore.

The first goal, the first object and objective of the prophecy of judgement is against the whole land of Israel. That goes on until we begin reading in verse 24 and 24-27 it is distinctly against the one who is called the prince of Israel. It is the then ruling King Zedekiah, the last descendant of David to sit on the throne. And he was exiled in 586 BC. He was the last of the Davidic Dynasty on earth until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ who was to fulfill all the promise to David, was rejected but some day bless God he will fulfill that marvelous promise and we'll see that before this wonderful short portion has finished its message. So the first area of attack if you will is against the whole land of Israel. Secondly against the king Zedekiah and then the prophecy turns to those who live in proximity to Judah, namely the children of Amon. Verse 28 and now son of man prophecy and say thus saith the Lord God concerning the children of Amon and concerning their reproach and say thou a sword, a sword is drawn for the slaughter it is furbished, cause it to devour that it may be as lightning. God is not a God of partiality; he is only partial to truth, to righteousness, to his own holy character. So here are three principle areas and they point out the cause of the judgment.

The Lord's sharpened sword is in prominence. It is emphasized again and again, not monotonously but as staccato blows. It comes to emphasize, to underscore, to stress, to put into prominence. It devours on every hand. The cause of the judgement of all Israel is there in verse 24. You've made your iniquity to be remembered. You've made it memorable. Never gonna be forgotten. You've done it, with such zeal you've done it with such constancy and continuously that who could forget it you've made your iniquity to be remembered in that in all your doings

your sins do appear because that you're come to remembrance you shall be taken with a hand. They've heaped unto themselves iniquity and transgression and sin until they are ensnared in their own noose. It's as Paul, writing to Timothy speaks of the ungodly in 1 Timothy 5:24, gives us a remarkable verse. Some men's sins are evident, going before unto judgement. If anyone were asked it's such a one, an ungodly one a wicked one, a transgressor is he an antagonist of God? You'd say well of course, the world knows that. Such is Hitlers and Mussolini and the like, some men's sins are evident, going before unto judgement. But you see others hide them and are very clever in camouflaging them. Some men also they follow after. It's only afterwards that they come to life.

But here with Israel they're in the first class. Your sins do appear, they are memorable, they are open, they are for display. They are easily detected. They're ensnared in their own noose and as though to bring all of this to a head, the prophet Ezekiel, without any favor or compromise or flattery points out the wicked, weak, vacillating Zedekiah. He says you are the very symbol of the sin of the nation. You remember he swore by God, with an oath using God's name he involved the honor of the living God in promising Nebuchadnezzar that he would not rebel, that he would be faithful, that he would be loyal. Nebuchadnezzar had had all kinds of promises broken by Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim and Jehoyakin. Now he thought at this long last certainly Zedekiah is going to keep his promise but he didn't. He's the very symbol of the sin of the nation, and he's addressed in most severe terminology. As though already suffering the punishment that his sins have brought upon him. This is a remarkably emphatic passage. And thou, verse 25, and thou oh deadly wounded, the original means he is transfixed. He is thrust through as with a javelin, as a man would be on the battlefield. Oh deadly wounded wicked one. And lest anybody mistake who is meant he comes right out and labels him the prince of Israel. Yes. He's seen as

though he were already undergoing the punishment that his sins have brought upon him. The language I see is vivid, it's emphatic.

The hour of his judgement has come. And how truly this was carried out we know from the fact of his deportation to Babylon but before he was deported he was taken to Riblah where Nebuchadnezzar had made his headquarters in the north, his princes and his seven sons were slain before his eyes and then his eyes were blinded. His last sight he'd seen was to see those near and dear to him done away with, slain. The slaying of his sons before his eyes then to have his own eyes put out by the enemy. And all those years of exile in Babylon his memory would recall again and again and again what his sighted eyes had seen. What a horrendous, what a terrible, terrifying judgement that was brought upon him. But you see he had involved the name of God in his commitment and he had used it all too glibly so that God's name was brought into disrepute. How could a heathen king think much of one's loyalty to God and how much loyalty God could command if his name could be used in such a way and then a promise, an oath made in that name so lightly set aside, so lightly discarded. So we have the cause of the judgement.

Now, precisely what is Ezekiel indicating for the time of the iniquity of the end, meaning the end of the monarchy through Zedekiah. Until a long long future day well the chaos is predicted. The judgement you see on Zedekiah is only the beginning of will for Israel. It's not a terminal point, not a [inaudible] it's a commencement. What is Ezekiel foretelling? He is saying that chaos is going to result from the Judgement that God brings. Everything is going to be turned upside down. Some men are writing books like Velikovsky, Immanuel Velikovsky has written a number of books uh world in upheaval uh world turned upside down, chaos, so many books if you'll look at your bookshelves and in your bookstores you'll see how many, how many books now have names and titles that talk about chaos, commotion, upheaval, tumult, violence,

distress. Everything but peace. God says thus saith the Lord God remove the miter, take off the crown and this shall no more be the same. Exalt that which is low and abase that which is high. Everything is going to be turned upside down. Upheaval will be the hallmark of the day. The miter that's spoken of here, remove the miter and the miter is the headdress of the high priest. It was a special type. The ordinary priest had head gear but it's not called by this technical name of the high priest. You remember the tiara the high priest had on it in, on a Gold plate, [inaudible] of the Nile. Holy unto the Lord is this miter of the high priest that distinctive mark of his office. Says the prophet Ezekiel remove it, put it aside, take it away, cast it off. Not gonna be used anymore. It is not gonna be needed.

More than that and take off the crown, remove the crown. Well the miter was worn by the high priest but the crown was for the head of the king. That too has to be removed. What's going to be the result? The low will be exalted. The lowest levels of society will be elevated and the high, the worthy, the noble, the worthwhile, the energetic, they are gonna be brought low. Society is going to be in a state of revolution and upheaval. These two tremendously important God given, God appointed offices, the priesthood and the royal office, the kingship are going to be removed. They're going to be put aside. And that is true to this very hour, and because of that society has a hole. We'll feel these shock waves in ever larger and ever widening circles. Society is going to be in a state of revolution, in a state of flux, in a state of change. My friends this passage declares as clearly as it knows how, God's death sentence on [inaudible] priesthood, it came to an end at the time of the destruction of the temple in 586 BC. There was not the [inaudible] priesthood later that there was at this time. We know [inaudible] glory, so many of the important things in the temple were gone it was a token worship.

There's the death sentence decreed on the Herodian priesthood and because this was the time of the beginning of the times of the gentiles, a political entity all of its own that goes on from the time of Nebuchadnezzar the great until the coming of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords our Lord Jesus Christ in visible appearance, not his first appearing but his second appearing before his reign on earth. God's death sentence, not only on the Herodian priesthood, but on the Davidic monarchy in so far as it will be vested in one who was a human being alone. It will be caught up and elevated and gloriously magnified in one who is the God Man who offers as the son of David, but of course rejected in that it is yet to be fulfilled, yet to be perfected. So the prophet predicts the complete overthrow of both offices. You can imagine what Ezekiel's hearers must have thought when he spoke of such a drastic, such a thoroughgoing, such a tremendously tragic prediction of the complete overthrow of these two prominent theocratic, God given offices. When Judah was led captive to Babylon, never forget it, it marked the end of the rule of the kings of David's house, and the Ark, and the [inaudible] glory were not present in the temple of Zerubbabel built after they return from Babylonian exile in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

And we're not left to guess, we're not left to conjecture these things because we read in Ezra 2 verse 63 the governor said unto him, this the one who was with them the governor from Persia, namely the great man of God Nehemiah watch they sought the register among these certain ones and the governor said unto them that they should not eat of the most holy things until there stood up a priest with Urim and Tummim. Yes. Those were parts of the apparel of the high priest whereby he discerned the will of God by the Urim and Tummim, a means of casting lots. Well that is tragic to remove the miter and take off the crown but someone says well as long as life can go on and folk are not disturbed in their living this probably wouldn't be too bad.

Though it would be sorrowful as they remember the former glory but there's more to it friends. Verse 26 of Ezekiel 21 goes on to say this shall be no more the same, the original is even more emphatic and vivid. Let me give it to you in the original Hebrew; this shall be no more this in other words the very condition you're looking at, the very circumstance that you are now contemplating while you're looking at it it no longer remains the same.

In kaleidoscopic fashion and in rapid panoramic manner, everything changes, everything is in a state of flux, everything is transitory, everything is changing. Change, change, change. And we hear it so much today. The only thing of which you can be certain, the only fixed thing is change. I repeat, the original says this not this, this shall not be this. Nothing will be allowed to remain as it had been before. Revolution, destruction will be the order of the day. Everything from the lowest to the highest is turned upside down. There's gonna be rest. There'll be security nowhere exalting that which is low well that's not God's order. There'll be rest and security nowhere in the world and that came about not only for Israel. Think of the kingdoms and the empires that followed. Babylon and even Nebuchadnezzar thought it would go on almost endlessly. But it was brought to an end in 539 BC, in came Medo-Persia and how great a power was Persia. Folks thought well that will go on. Time without end but in came Alexander the Great in the fourth century BC, and we have the Grecian Empire, and my with what lightning power he displayed that his kingdom was gonna be a universal kingdom.

He in a sense was a great exponent of the Blitzkrieg, as were the Assyrians before him. But he did not live very long and his kingdom broke up into four parts going to four of this generals. Ptolemy and Seleucus, Lysimachus and Cassander. Ptolemy in Egypt, Seleucus in Syria, and then Macedonia and Asia Minor divided between Lysimachus and Cassander. And you say well surely a kingdom of Alexander though it may break up, with four to carry on, ah

but Daniel tells us it's not even going to be, Daniel 11 not with the power that Alexander had and so in time 63 or so BC in comes Pompey and Rome takes over. Oh yes, change, change and decay as the hymn has it. All around I see oh though blessed one abide with me more recent times think of the loss of rule by so many crowned heads of the world is seems to be something that's going out of style. How many rulers do we have in Europe that are crowned heads, that are of royalty? If it takes a public vote as it has in Greece, the king's gone. He, the king, the royal house is only a figure head in the great republic of the great democracy of England. The monarchy but it's a very, very limited Monarchy, it's a Constitutional Monarchy. Parliament has a great deal to say about it. And then what should we say about crowned heads in other areas of the east.

Oh my friends there's been a great loss of rule by so many of them, and the exaltation of the most base of men think of a marvelously civilized, developed, skilled technically superior nation like Germany suffering that Hitler, the very dregs of humanity. And Italy, Italy of the descendants of the Roman Emperors to think that they would stand for the exaltation office of such a base one as a Mussolini. They turned things upside down in Israel, did they not? Now God says it is my turn to do so. The world chaos has been brought about, not accidentally, not by some happenstance. No it's been brought about by the very judgement of God. No peace, no security. Have you noticed friends that again and again we heard in World War I and World War II make the world safe for peace and democracy? We're gonna have peace around the corner. There is going to be peace on earth, there is going to be security but there's security nowhere. And they thought that although the League of Nations was such a failure we'd make sure this time. We'll call it not only United Nations, as though that would help to be a cohesive element, a cementing factor. We will call the main council the Security Council, imagine it. Security

Council. And I need not underscore to you my friend how many how many nations have known insecurity since that time. Europe, America has known insecurity. It seems as if America has taken to what's been in so many other countries, succession by assassination. Talk about security. Demonstrations, upheaval on every hand. In the highest offices, and is their security on the other continents of the world that have been divided. There's a North Korea and a South Korea. A North Vietnam and a South Vietnam. It seems as if instead of security and unity the world is going into just the opposite. It's going into divisiveness such as has never been known before. The world is not becoming more and more united; it's becoming more and more disunited, separated, and fragmented and all the rest. I want to repeat that the cause of the judgement is given, the sin of Israel.

And the chaos predicted placed in such tremendously clear cut predictions that all authority because that's the concept of authority in the religious realm, priesthood removed. Authority in the political realm, that too will be removed. Nothing is going to be allowed to be stabilized. There is no stability. And no wonder Paul says that in a coming day, when they shall say Peace, peace, then sudden destruction shall come upon them. Even the prophet Jeremiah said they healed the wound of the daughter of my people so slightly. In other words they don't do a good job of it all. They don't do a healing of the people's wound at all. They heal the wound of the daughter of my people slightly saying [inaudible] peace when there is no peace. We shall continue on this same theme the Chaos predicted.