EZEKIEL 14

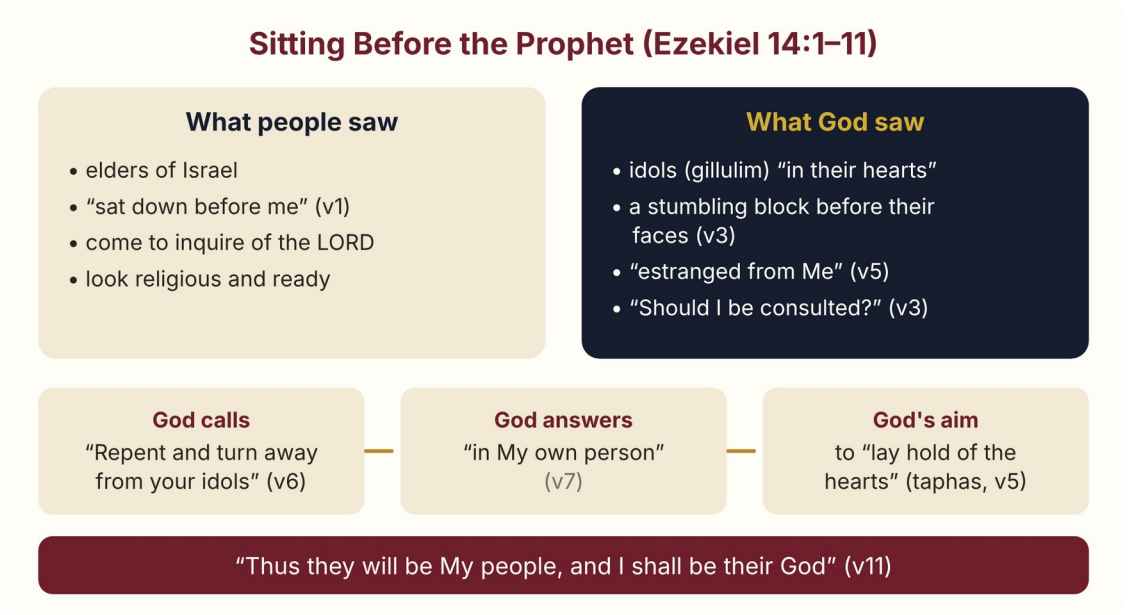
Idols in the Heart: Noah, Daniel and Job

> *“Repent and turn away from your idols and turn your faces away from all your abominations.”*
> EZEKIEL 14:6

Where Ezekiel has brought us

1. Ezekiel is in Babylon among the exiles of 597 BC, and Zedekiah reigns in a still-standing Jerusalem.

2. Chapter 13 exposed the false prophets who told the people what they wanted to hear.



Idols Set Up in the Heart

Elders sit before the prophet while their hearts belong to idols.

EZEKIEL 14:3

"Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts and have put right before their faces the stumbling block of their iniquity. Should I be consulted by them at all?

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik, quoting Wiersbe, compares these elders to the Pharisees of Matthew 15:8–9, and Guzik himself to Ananias and Sapphira: correct on the outside, divided within.

WHAT IT MEANS

The elders did everything right on the outside: they "came to me and sat down before me" (v1). God looked past the posture to the heart.

Idols (גִּלּוּלִים)
GILLULIM · "IDOLS"

Gillulim is a contemptuous word for idols, possibly related to dung pellets, and it is Ezekiel's favorite term for false gods. These elders had no statues in Ezekiel's living room.

Repent and Turn

Turn from the idols and turn your face away — or face God Himself.

EZEKIEL 14:6

"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Repent and turn away from your idols and turn your faces away from all your abominations.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik notes that the call to repent reaches the foreigner living in Israel too (v7): God's standard is the same for everyone in the community. The one who refuses, God will oppose personally.

WHAT IT MEANS

Before God describes the judgment, He offers the way out: repent, turn, turn your faces (v6). It is plain, and it is open to all — "anyone of the house of Israel or of the immigrants who stay in Israel" (v7).

Repent / turn (שׁוּב)
SHUB · "TURN BACK, RETURN"

Shub means to turn back, to return. God's call in v6 is built on it: "Repent and turn away from your idols and turn your faces away from all your abominations."

The Deceived Prophet

Those who refuse the truth are given the lie they prefer.

EZEKIEL 14:9

"But if the prophet is prevailed upon to speak a word, it is I, the LORD, who have prevailed upon that prophet, and I will stretch out My hand against him and destroy him from among My people Israel.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik, quoting Block, sums up the passage: 'Yahweh answers insincerity with insincerity.' The man who wanted a flattering word gets one, and both he and the prophet bear the same guilt (v10).

WHAT IT MEANS

This is a sobering section. A man who wants to keep his idol can always find someone to bless it.

Prevailed upon (פָּתָה)
PATHAH · "ENTICE, DECEIVE"

Pathah means to entice, persuade or deceive. If an idol-hearted man goes shopping for a prophet who will tell him what he wants, and the prophet gives him that word, God says, "it is I, the LORD, who have prevailed upon that prophet" (v9).

Noah, Daniel and Job

Four judgments, and the most righteous men could save only themselves.

EZEKIEL 14:13

"Son of man, if a country sins against Me by committing unfaithfulness, and I stretch out My hand against it, destroy its supply of bread, send famine against it and cut off from it both man and beast,

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik calls famine, wild beasts, sword and plague 'Ezekiel's version of the four horsemen' (compare Rev 6:8). Guzik, quoting Wright: 'a nation cannot shelter under the goodness of a few individuals.'

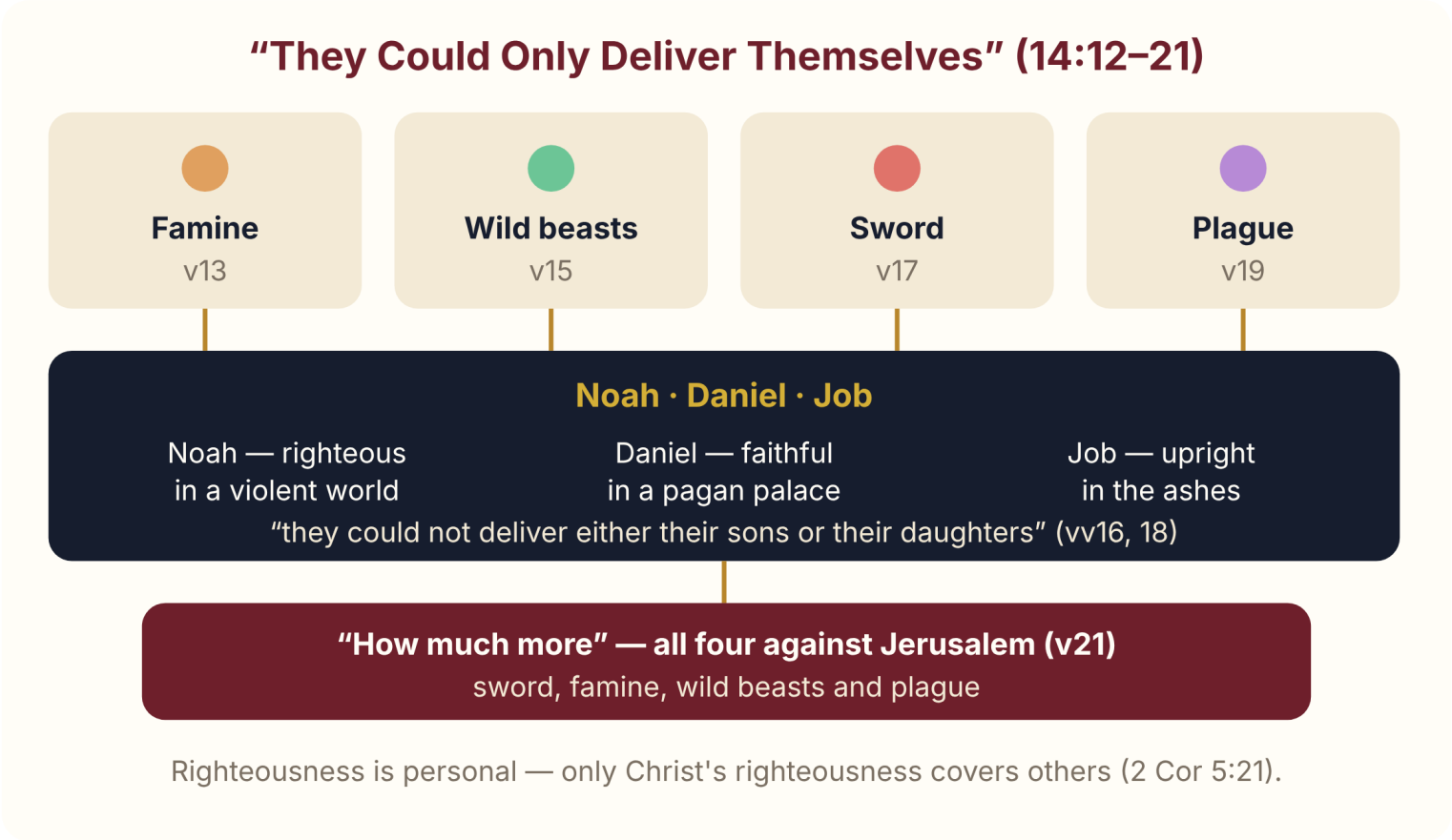
WHAT IT MEANS

God pictures four judgments one at a time: famine (v13), wild beasts (v15), sword (v17) and plague (v19). Each time the answer is the same: even if Noah, Daniel and Job lived there, they could save only themselves.

Righteousness (צְדָקָה)
TSEDAQAH · "RIGHT CONDUCT"

Tsedaqah is right conduct, conformity to God's standard. Noah, Daniel and Job each had it — Noah in a violent generation, Daniel in a pagan palace, Job in the ashes.

Four Judgments, Three Righteous Men



In each judgment Noah, Daniel and Job could deliver only themselves; Jerusalem faces all four at once (vv12–21).

Survivors Who Prove God Right

All four judgments at once — and the exiles will see why.

EZEKIEL 14:21

For thus says the Lord GOD, "How much more when I send My four severe judgments against Jerusalem: sword, famine, wild beasts and plague to cut off man and beast from it!

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik notes that "conduct and actions" in v22 are evil deeds; these survivors are not a godly remnant. Guzik, quoting Taylor: 'So the remnant of the fugitives would be wicked men.'

WHAT IT MEANS

"How much more" (v21): if one judgment would be enough to empty a land, Jerusalem faces all four at once — "sword, famine, wild beasts and plague." Yet some will survive and be brought out, sons and daughters (v22).

In vain (חִנָּם)
CHINNAM · "WITHOUT CAUSE"

Chinnam means without cause, for nothing. When the survivors of Jerusalem arrive in Babylon, the exiles will see their conduct and say God was right: "you will know that I have not done in vain whatever I did to it" (v23).

What to carry from this chapter

1

Idols live behind the eyes.

The elders' idols were “in their hearts,” set right before their faces as a stumbling block (v3).

2

A contemptuous name.

Gillulim, Ezekiel's favorite word for idols, is possibly related to dung pellets.

3

A big Bible under the arm.

Guzik, quoting McGee, likens the elders to churchgoers who look right while the heart is divided.

4

God goes after the heart.

His aim is to “lay hold of the hearts” of those estranged from Him (v5) — Wiersbe, in Guzik, says to ‘recapture’ them.

More to carry

5

Repentance turns the face.

Shub is a change of direction: “turn your faces away from all your abominations” (v6).

6

Insincerity answered.

Guzik, quoting Block: ‘Yahweh answers insincerity with insincerity’ — the man who shops for a lie finds one (v9).

7

No borrowed righteousness.

Even Noah, Daniel and Job “could only deliver themselves” (v14); faith cannot be inherited.

8

Never in vain.

The exiles will know God has “not done in vain whatever I did to it” (v23) — chinnam, without cause.

Talk it through

1. What is something a man can set up “in his heart” as an idol while still looking faithful on the outside?

2. Why won't God give guidance to a man who keeps his idol and still asks for direction?

3. What does it look like, practically, to “turn your faces away” from an idol this week?

4. How have I been tempted to lean on someone else's faith — a parent's, a pastor's, a wife's — instead of walking with God myself?

5. How does it comfort us to know God never acts “in vain”?

CLOSING

God sees past the chair we sit in to the throne of the heart, and He does not play along with a divided one. But He is not trying to throw the heart away — He wants to lay hold of it. Turn your face from the idol, walk with Him yourself, and trust the righteousness of Christ, the only One whose goodness covers others.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

O·I·A study, slides and reflection journal: see the Ezekiel study page.