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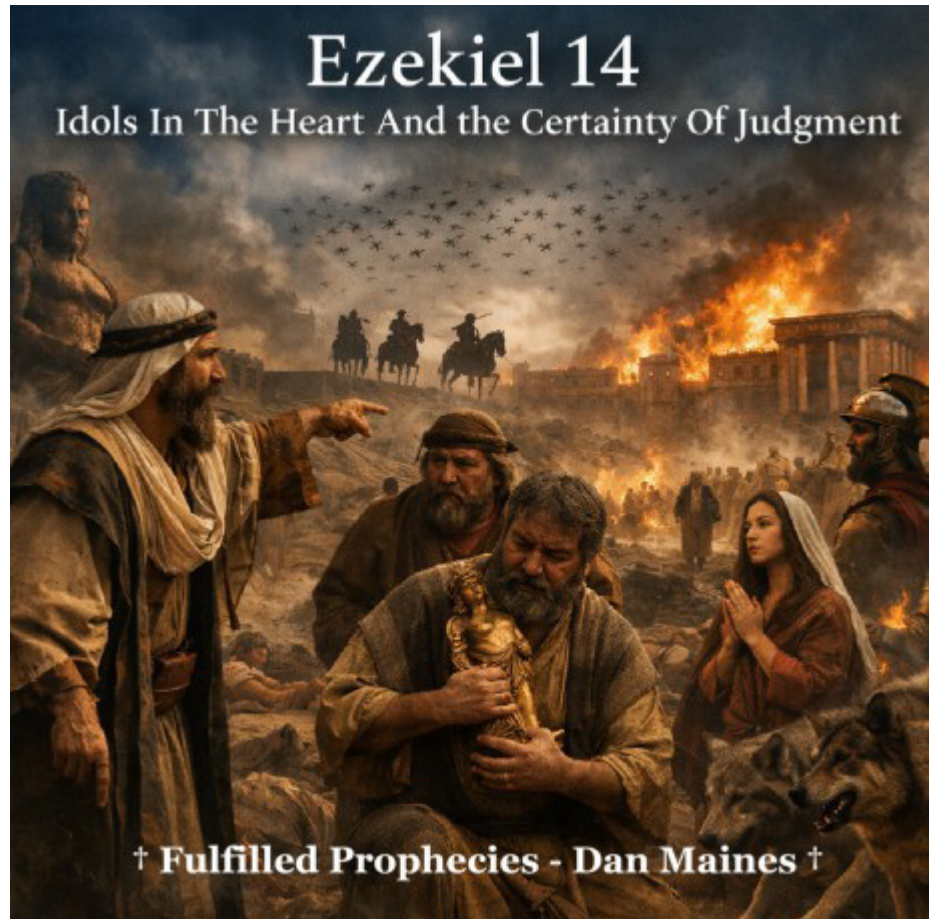
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Ezekiel 14 Idols In The Heart And The Certainty Of Judgment



By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† Ezekiel 14 exposes the real problem, it wasn't just outward idolatry, it was idols set up in the heart (Ezekiel 14:3).

† God shows that judgment wasn't random, it was directly tied to what the people loved and trusted instead of Him (Ezekiel 14:4).

† This chapter connects directly to the coming judgment on

Jerusalem, showing why it had to happen in that generation (Matthew 23:36).

Ezekiel 14:1-3

Then some elders of Israel came to me and sat down before me. And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 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 wrongdoing. Should I be consulted by them at all?

† The issue wasn't just external idols, it was internal allegiance, they carried their false gods within them (Ezekiel 14:3).

† This explains why outward religion didn't matter, their hearts were already committed elsewhere (Isaiah 29:13).

† Jesus later exposes the same condition, outward righteousness with inward corruption (Matthew 23:27-28).

Ezekiel 14:4-5

Therefore speak to them and tell them, This is what the Lord God says: Any man of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his wrongdoing, and then comes to the prophet, I the Lord will be brought to give him an answer in the matter in view of the multitude of his idols, in order to take hold of the hearts of the house of Israel who are estranged from Me through all their idols.

† God answers them according to their idols, meaning He gives them over to what they've chosen (Romans 1:24).

† This is judgment, not random punishment, but God confirming their own desires (Psalm 81:12).

† Their separation from God wasn't forced, it came from their own rejection of Him (Hosea 4:17).

Ezekiel 14:6-8

Therefore say to the house of Israel, This is what the Lord God says: Repent and turn away from your idols, and turn your faces

away from all your abominations. For anyone of the house of Israel or of the strangers who reside in Israel who separates himself from Me, sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his wrongdoing, and then comes to the prophet to inquire of Me for himself, I the Lord will be brought to answer him in My own person. And I will set My face against that person and make him a sign and a proverb, and I will eliminate him from among My people. So you will know that I am the Lord.

† The call to repent shows judgment wasn't inevitable, they had opportunity to turn (Ezekiel 18:30-32).

† God setting His face against them echoes covenant judgment language (Leviticus 26:17).

† Being cut off points forward to the destruction of that covenant people in AD 70 (Matthew 21:43).

Ezekiel 14:9-11

But if the prophet is persuaded so that he speaks a word, it is I, the Lord, who has persuaded that prophet, and I will stretch out My hand against him and eliminate him from among My people Israel. So they will bear their punishment, the punishment of the prophet will be the same as the punishment of the one who seeks an answer, in order that the house of Israel may no longer stray from Me and no longer defile themselves with all their offenses. So they will be My people, and I shall be their God, declares the Lord God.

† False prophets were part of the judgment, confirming what people wanted to hear (2 Timothy 4:3).

† Both the listener and the prophet are held accountable, truth was available but rejected (Jeremiah 5:31).

† The goal was always restoration, that they might truly be God's people (Jeremiah 31:33).

Ezekiel 14:12-14

Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 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 eliminate both human and animal life from it, even though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in its midst, by their own righteousness they could only save themselves, declares the Lord God.

† No one else's righteousness could save the nation, judgment was corporate and unavoidable (Jeremiah 15:1).

† This directly refutes the idea that heritage or association saves, each person is accountable (Ezekiel 18:20).

† Jesus confirms this principle, each generation bears its own guilt (Matthew 23:35-36).

Ezekiel 14:15-20

If I were to cause harmful animals to pass through the land and they left it childless and it became desolate so that no one would pass through it because of the animals, though these three men were in its midst, as I live, declares the Lord God, they could not save either their sons or their daughters. They alone would be saved, but the land would be desolate. Or if I were to bring a sword on that country and say, Let a sword pass through the country, and I eliminate both human and animal life from it, even though these three men were in its midst, as I live, declares the Lord God, they could not save either their sons or their daughters, but they alone would be saved. Or if I were to send a plague against that country and pour out My wrath on it in blood, to eliminate both human and animal life from it, even though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in its midst, as I live, declares the Lord God, they could not save either their son or their daughter. They would save only themselves by their righteousness.

† The four judgments, famine, beasts, sword, pestilence, are covenant curses (Leviticus 26:21-26).

† This same pattern shows up in the first century destruction of Jerusalem (Luke 21:20-24).

† No one could escape by association, only by true righteousness, fulfilled in Christ (Philippians 3:9).

Ezekiel 14:21-23

For this is what the Lord God says: How much more when I send My four severe judgments against Jerusalem, sword, famine, wild animals, and plague, to eliminate both human and animal life from it! Yet, behold, survivors will be left in it who will be brought out, both sons and daughters. Behold, they are going to come out to you, and you will see their conduct and their actions; then you will be comforted for the disaster which I have brought against Jerusalem, for everything which I have brought upon it. Then they will comfort you when you see their conduct and actions, for you will know that I have not done without cause whatever I have done to it, declares the Lord God.

† God makes it clear, judgment had a cause, it wasn't arbitrary (Lamentations 1:8).

† A remnant remains, pointing forward to those who would enter the new covenant (Romans 11:5).

† This is fulfilled when the old covenant system ends and the faithful inherit the kingdom (Hebrews 12:28).

Historical References

† Josephus records the famine, sword, and devastation in Jerusalem, confirming these covenant judgments came exactly as described.

† Eusebius notes that believers escaped Jerusalem before its destruction, showing the remnant principle in action.

† Tertullian speaks of the judgment on Israel as just and deserved because of their rejection of Christ.

How It Applies To Us Today

- † Idolatry isn't just statues, it's anything we place above God in our hearts (Colossians 3:5).
- † God still gives people over to what they choose, truth rejected leads to deception (2 Thessalonians 2:10-11).
- † We aren't saved by association, church attendance, or family, only by true righteousness in Christ (Romans 10:9-10).
- † Judgment in scripture shows God's justice, not cruelty, He acts with purpose and truth (Psalm 19:9).
- † The fulfilled reality means the kingdom is established, and we live in it now, not waiting for it (Luke 17:20-21).

Q & A Appendix

Q What are idols of the heart?

A Anything we trust, love, or prioritize above God (Ezekiel 14:3; Colossians 3:5).

Q Why did God answer them according to their idols?

A Because they rejected truth, so God gave them over to their own desires (Romans 1:24).

Q Could the righteous save the nation?

A No, each person is accountable, even Noah, Daniel, and Job couldn't save others (Ezekiel 14:14; Jeremiah 15:1).

Q When were these judgments fulfilled?

A In the destruction of Jerusalem, culminating in AD 70 (Luke 21:20-22).

Q What does the remnant represent?

A Those who remained faithful and entered the new covenant kingdom (Romans 11:5; Hebrews 12:28).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Ezekiel 14

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History; Tertullian, Apology

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