EZEKIEL 22

No One in the Gap

> *“I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one.”*
> EZEKIEL 22:30

Where Ezekiel has brought us

1. Ezekiel is still among the exiles in Babylon.

2. Chapter 20 reviewed Israel’s rebellious history, and chapter 21 drew God’s sword.

The Bloody City

God makes Ezekiel the prosecutor: cause her to know her abominations

EZEKIEL 22:2

"And you, son of man, will you judge, will you judge the bloody city? Then cause her to know all her abominations.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik, quoting Block, notes that Ezekiel seems to have borrowed the phrase "the bloody city" from Nahum's description of Nineveh (Nah 3:1). Guzik's reaction: 'Jerusalem seemed as bad as Nineveh!'

WHAT IT MEANS

God asks Ezekiel twice, "will you judge, will you judge the bloody city?" (v2). His job is to make Jerusalem face what she has done.

Blood (דָּם)
DAM · "BLOOD"

Dam is blood, especially blood shed in violence. Its plural, damim, means bloodguilt.

The Charge Sheet

Rulers, families, worship and money all broken — because "you have forgotten Me"

EZEKIEL 22:6

"Behold, the rulers of Israel, each according to his power, have been in you for the purpose of shedding blood.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik passes on several older commentators here. Feinberg speaks of judicial murders, tying verse 6 to the innocent blood Manasseh shed (2 Kgs 21:16; 24:4).

WHAT IT MEANS

The list walks right through the Ten Commandments. Rulers use power to kill (v6).

Forgotten (שָׁכַח)
SHAKACH · "FORGET"

Shakach means to forget, to ignore, to stop caring. After a long list of crimes against parents, strangers, orphans, widows, the sabbath, marriage and neighbors, God names the root in verse 12: "you have forgotten Me."

The Furnace

Israel has become dross, and God gathers her into Jerusalem to melt her

EZEKIEL 22:18

"Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to Me; all of them are bronze and tin and iron and lead in the furnace; they are the dross of silver.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik, quoting Block, defines dross as 'the waste produced in the extraction of silver from ore.' He passes on Clarke, who says 'the most violent must be resorted to,' since milder means had failed.

WHAT IT MEANS

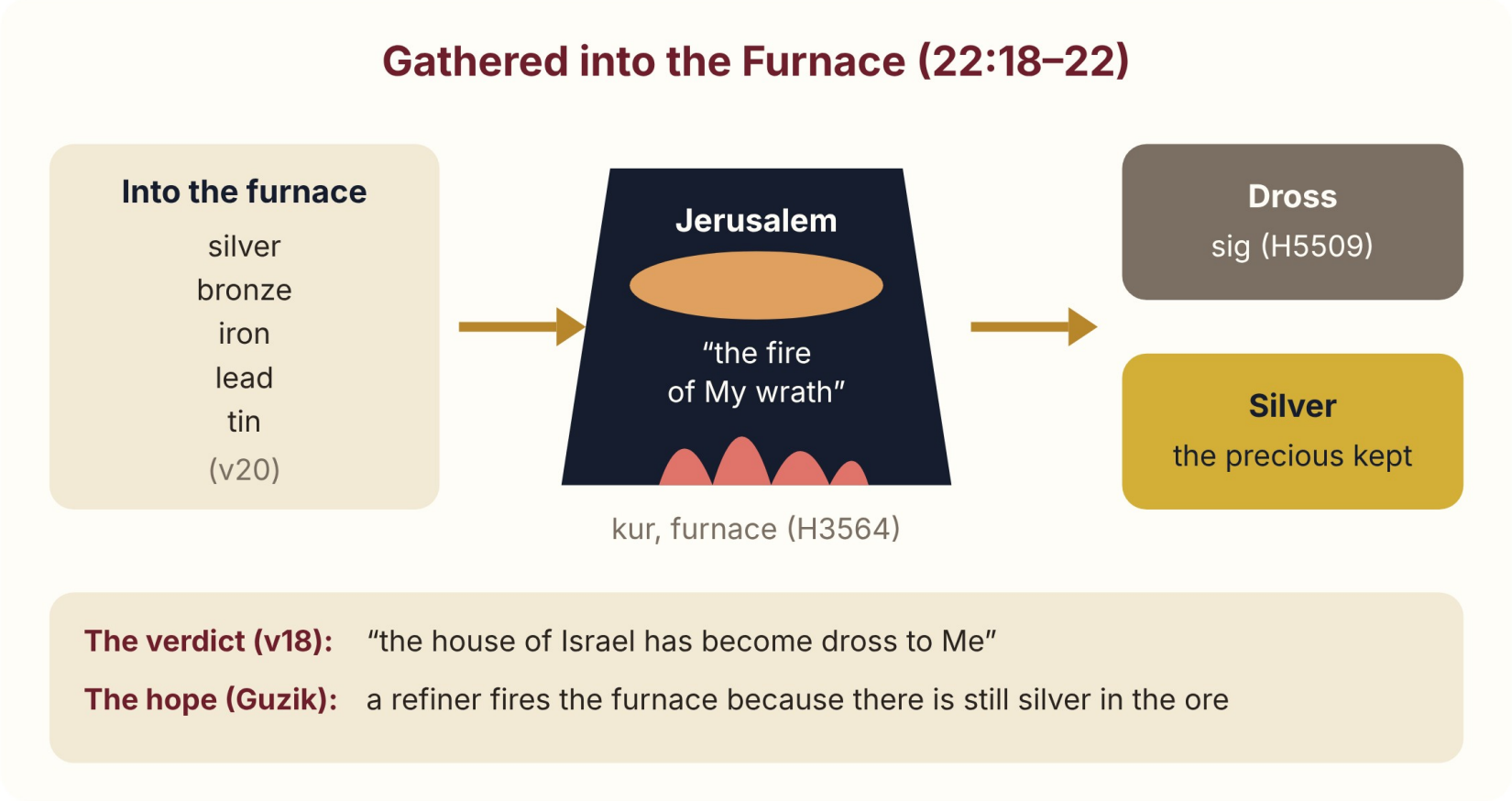
When Babylon's army came, people from the countryside fled into Jerusalem for safety.

Dross (סִיג)

SIG · "DROSS"

Sig is the scum and slag skimmed off molten metal. God says, "the house of Israel has become dross to Me" (v18): bronze, tin, iron and lead left over after the silver is gone.

The Furnace: Dross and Silver (22:17–22)



God gathers Israel into Jerusalem like metals into a furnace; judgment burns off the dross, and a refiner fires the furnace because there is silver in the ore (Mal 3:2–3).

Every Class Corrupt

Prophets, priests, princes and people — from the palace to the pulpit to the street

EZEKIEL 22:25

"There is a conspiracy of her prophets in her midst like a roaring lion tearing the prey. They have devoured lives; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in the midst of her.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik passes on Feinberg's sharp observation about the prophets in verse 25: they were 'directly responsible for the multiplication of widows' by urging war against Babylon with false promises.

WHAT IT MEANS

God calls Judah "a land that is not cleansed or rained on in the day of indignation" (v24): no blessing, only drought. Then He goes class by class.

Whitewash (תָּפֵל)
TAPHEL · "WHITEWASH"

Taphel is plaster or untempered mortar, a cover smeared over a weak wall. It comes from chapter 13, where the false prophets plastered a cracked wall and called it sound (13:10–16).

From the Palace to the Pulpit to the Street (22:23–30)

Every Class Corrupt (22:25–29)

PROPHETS (v25)	"like a roaring lion tearing the prey"
PRIESTS (v26)	"no distinction between the holy and the profane"
PRINCES (v27)	"like wolves tearing the prey"
PROPHETS (v28)	"smeared whitewash for them"
PEOPLE (v29)	"practiced oppression and committed robbery"

The broken wall (v30)



"I searched for a man among them" — "but I found no one."

Every class in Judah failed, and God searched the broken wall for one man to stand in the gap.

No One in the Gap

God searched for one man to stand in the breach, and found no one

EZEKIEL 22:30

"I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik points to the intercessors of Israel's past: Abraham pleading for Sodom (Gen 18:22–33) and Moses, who 'stood in the breach before Him' (Ps 106:23). In Ezekiel's day God found no one (compare Jer 5:1).

WHAT IT MEANS

This may be the saddest verse in Ezekiel. God was not eager to destroy; He searched for a man who would stand in the gap "so that I would not destroy it" (v30).

Gap (פֶּרֶץ)
PERETS · "BREACH, GAP"

Perets is a breach, a break in a wall. Its partner is gader (H1447), a stone wall or fence.

What to carry from this chapter

1

As bad as Nineveh.

Guzik, quoting Block, notes that “the bloody city” echoes Nahum’s word for Nineveh.

2

Blood is the drumbeat.

Dam (H1818) and its plural for bloodguilt run through verses 2 to 27.

3

The Ten Commandments, broken.

The charge sheet walks through parents, sabbath, adultery, theft and false witness.

4

The root sin.

Under every crime sits one line: “you have forgotten Me” (v12).

More to carry

5

Dross, not silver.

Sig (H5509) is the slag skimmed off molten metal; Israel had become waste.

6

A refiner's hope.

Guzik notes a refiner only fires the furnace when there is silver in the ore.

7

Whitewash kills.

Prophets plastered over cracks with "Thus says the Lord GOD" when God had not spoken (v28).

8

The Man in the gap.

Guzik sees Jesus as the one Man who stands in the gap and always intercedes (Heb 7:25).

Talk it through

1. Why does God call Jerusalem “the bloody city,” and why is she judged more strictly than the nations?

2. How does the list in verses 6–12 trace back to the single charge “you have forgotten Me”?

3. What hope, if any, does the picture of a furnace hold for a man whose life has melted down?

4. What does whitewash look like in the way we encourage struggling men today?

5. What would it mean for you to “stand in the gap” for your family or the men around you?

CLOSING

Jerusalem forgot God, and every part of her life came apart. God searched for one man to stand in the gap and found no one. But Jesus has stood in that gap for us, and He calls us to stand in prayer for the people He has put in front of us.

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

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