EZEKIEL 5

This Is Jerusalem: Judgment Weighed to the Hair

“This is Jerusalem; I have set her at the center of the nations, with lands around her.”
EZEKIEL 5:5

Where Ezekiel has brought us

1. Chapter 5 finishes the sign-acts that began in chapter 4.

2. For the first time in the book, God explains the signs in plain words: “This is Jerusalem” (v5).

The Razor and the Scales

A priest shaves his head with a sword and weighs out the hair in thirds.

EZEKIEL 5:1

"As for you, son of man, take a sharp sword; take and use it as a barber's razor on your head and beard. Then take scales for weighing and divide the hair.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik counts this as Ezekiel's fourth sign of judgment, after the three in chapter 4. He passes on Clarke: 'Cutting off the hair was a sign of mourning.'

WHAT IT MEANS

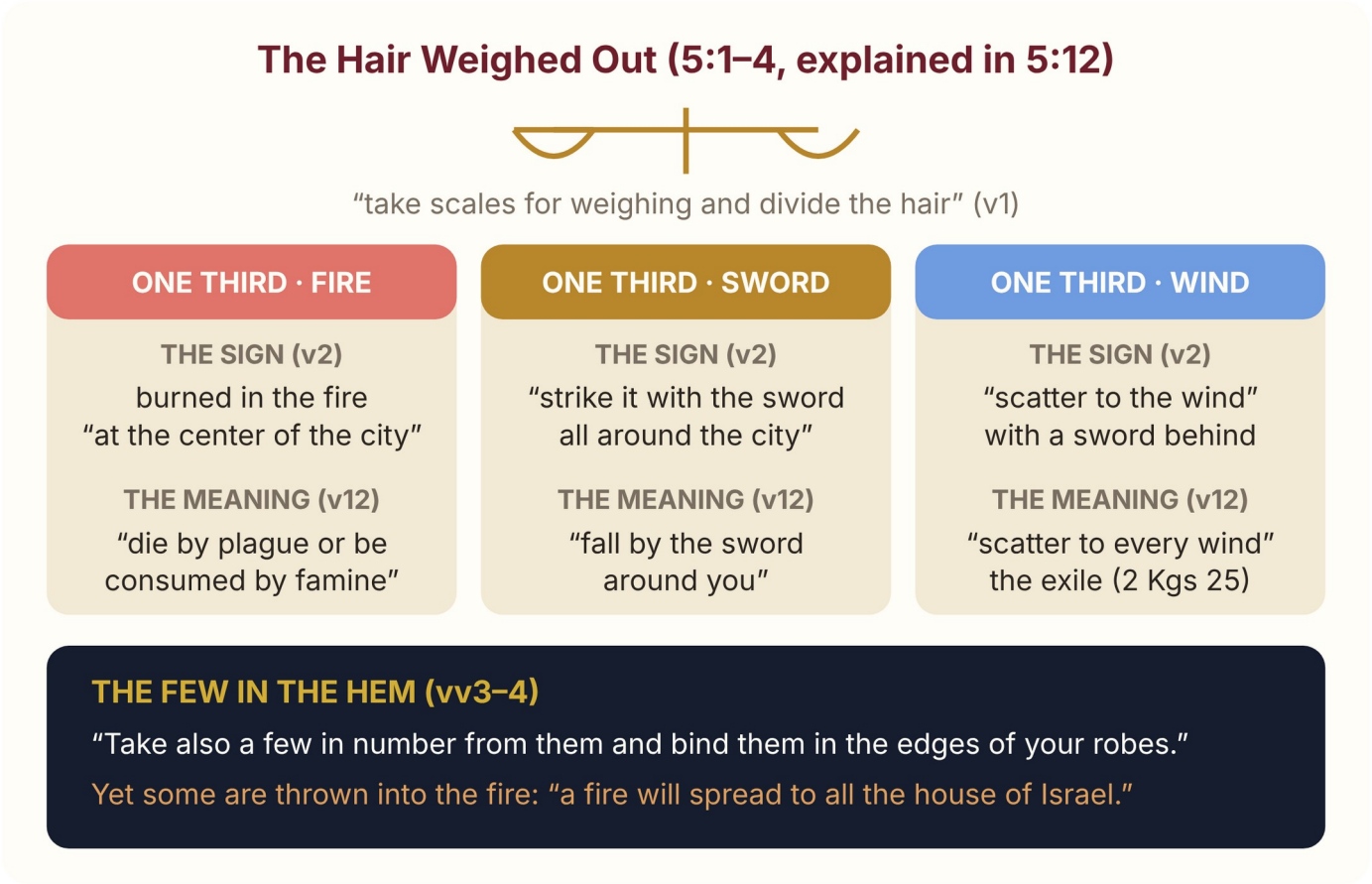
Ezekiel was a priest, and priests did not shave their heads. So when he takes a sword to his own head and beard, everybody watching knows something holy is being disgraced.

razor (תַּעַר)

TAʿAR · "RAZOR"

Ta'ar is a razor, a knife or sheath. Here the razor is a sword (chereb, H2719, a weapon of war), and Block notes that in Ezekiel the sword word always means a military weapon.

The Hair Weighed Out



The sign of 5:1–4 and its meaning in 5:12: three thirds weighed exactly, and a few hairs kept in the hem.

A Few Hairs in the Hem

A handful is bound in the prophet's robe, and even some of those go into the fire.

EZEKIEL 5:4

"Take again some of them and throw them into the fire and burn them in the fire; from it a fire will spread to all the house of Israel.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik passes on Clarke, who identifies the few hairs with the few Jews left in the land after 586 BC under Gedaliah. Even some of those go into the fire (v4).

WHAT IT MEANS

Here is the first ray of hope in the chapter. Out of a whole head of hair, God tells Ezekiel to keep a few and bind them in the edge of his robe.

edges (כָּנָף)
KANAPH · "WING, HEM"

Kanaph means a wing, and from that the corner or hem of a garment. Ezekiel ties a few hairs into the edges of his robe, the place a man keeps something close and safe.

This Is Jerusalem

God's city, set at the center to show the nations, did worse than they did.

EZEKIEL 5:5

"Thus says the Lord GOD, 'This is Jerusalem; I have set her at the center of the nations, with lands around her.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik notes that Israel was central both geographically, between the great empires, and in God's plan of redemption. Wright, in Guzik, calls Jerusalem 'the spiritual centre of the earth.'

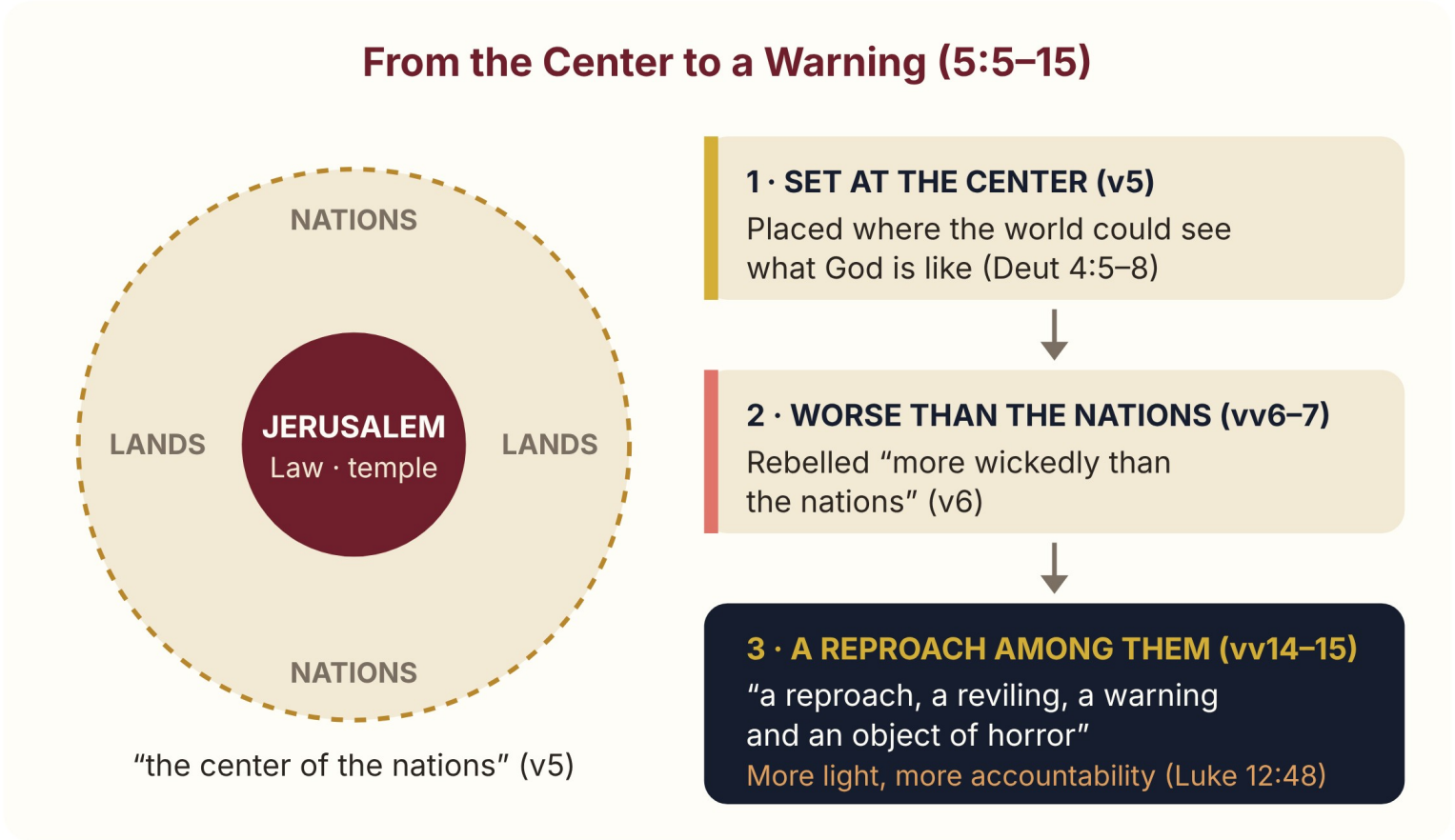
WHAT IT MEANS

The exiles wanted to hear that God would judge Babylon. Instead God points at His own city and says, "This is Jerusalem."

rebelled (מָרָה)
MARAH · "REBEL BITTERLY"

Marah means to be contentious, bitterly rebellious. It is the word for a son who fights his father, not a child who simply forgets.

From the Center to a Warning



Jerusalem was set at the center of the nations to show them God, and became a warning to them instead (5:5–15).

I, Even I, Am Against You

God swears by His own life, and the three thirds of hair are explained.

EZEKIEL 5:10

'Therefore, fathers will eat their sons among you, and sons will eat their fathers; for I will execute judgments on you and scatter all your remnant to every wind.

WHAT IT MEANS

"Behold, I, even I, am against you" (v8). The worst thing that can happen to a people is not an enemy army; it is God Himself standing against them.

detestable idols (שִׁקּוּץ)
SHIQQUTS · "DETESTABLE THING"

Shiqquts is a filthy, detestable thing, a word God uses for an idol. It stands beside toebah (H8441), abominations, something disgusting to God.

My Anger Will Be Spent

God's zeal runs its course, and Jerusalem becomes a warning to the nations.

EZEKIEL 5:17

'Moreover, I will send on you famine and wild beasts, and they will bereave you of children; plague and bloodshed also will pass through you, and I will bring the sword on you. I, the LORD, have spoken.'"

DAVID GUZIK

Taylor, in Guzik, notes that the Hebrew word for zeal 'covers both zeal and jealousy, as well as resentment and indignation.'

WHAT IT MEANS

Three times this chapter closes a thought with "I, the LORD, have spoken" (vv13, 15, 17). God means what He says. His anger had been held back for generations, and now it would be spent.

zeal (קִנְאָה)
QIN'AH · "ZEAL, JEALOUSY"

Qin'ah is ardor, zeal, jealousy. In verse 13 God says the people will know "that I, the LORD, have spoken in My zeal."

What to carry from this chapter

1

A priest shaved.

Shaving was forbidden to priests, so Ezekiel's shaved head announced mourning and the loss of holy status.

2

The razor is a sword.

The word is a weapon of war; Babylon's army would be God's razor passing over the land.

3

Judged to the hair.

The hair is weighed on scales before it is divided; God's judgments are exact, never careless.

4

A few in the hem.

A handful of hairs bound in the prophet's robe pictures the remnant God always keeps.

More to carry

5

This is Jerusalem.

For the first time God explains the sign-acts plainly, and the target is His own city, not Babylon.

6

More light, more accountability.

Jerusalem had the Law and the temple and did worse than nations that had neither.

7

Rebellion, not ignorance.

Marah is bitter, contentious rebellion; they rejected what they knew.

8

Zeal is jealous love.

Qin'ah covers zeal and jealousy, the burning love of a betrayed husband, not petty temper.

Talk it through

1. Why would God have a priest disgrace himself by shaving his head and beard? What was the sign saying before a word was spoken?

2. God kept a few hairs in the hem, and then threw some of them into the fire. What do both halves of that picture teach about the remnant?

3. Jerusalem was set “at the center of the nations.” What had God given her, and how is privilege tied to accountability?

4. Verse 11 names idols in the sanctuary as the cause of judgment. If your body is now God's temple, what might be standing in it that does not belong?

5. How does the zeal of God against Jerusalem help you understand what Jesus bore at the cross?

CLOSING

God's judgments are weighed to the hair, and His zeal is the jealous love of a faithful Husband. Jerusalem had everything and despised it. But even on the worst day, a few hairs were bound in the hem, and in Christ God still keeps His own.

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

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