

POWER HOUR

3/1/2026

Lesson Text:
Ezekiel 22:17-31

Background Scripture:
Isaiah 1:21-26, 59:14-20

Devotional Reading:
Malachi 3:1-5, Matthew 25:31-46 &
Zephaniah 3:1-8

“THE DROSS OF
UNRIGHTEOUSNESS”

NLT TRANSLATION

Golden Text: and you will melt like silver in fierce heat. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have poured out my fury on you. Ezekiel 22:22 NLT

Time: between 593 and 571 B.C.

Place: Babylon

Ezekiel 22:17-31 NLT

17 Then this message came to me from the Lord: **18** “Son of man, the people of Israel are the worthless slag that remains after silver is smelted. They are the dross that is left over—a useless mixture of copper, tin, iron, and lead. **19** So tell them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Because you are all worthless slag, I will bring you to my crucible in Jerusalem. **20** Just as silver, copper, iron, lead, and tin are melted down in a furnace, I will melt you down in the heat of my fury. **21** I will gather you together and blow the fire of my anger upon you, **22** and you will melt like silver in fierce heat. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have poured out my fury on you.’” **23** Again a message came to me from the Lord: **24** “Son of man, give the people of Israel this message: In the day of my indignation, you will be like a polluted land, a land without rain. **25** Your princes plot conspiracies just as lions stalk their prey. They devour innocent people, seizing treasures and extorting wealth. They make many widows in the land. **26** Your priests have violated my instructions and defiled my holy things. They make no distinction between what is holy and what is not. And they do not teach my people the difference between what is ceremonially clean and unclean. They disregard my Sabbath days so that I am dishonored among them. **27** Your leaders are like wolves who tear apart their victims. They actually destroy people's lives for money! **28** And your prophets cover

up for them by announcing false visions and making lying predictions. They say, 'My message is from the Sovereign Lord,' when the Lord hasn't spoken a single word to them. **29** Even common people oppress the poor, rob the needy, and deprive foreigners of justice. **30** "I looked for someone who might rebuild the wall of righteousness that guards the land. I searched for someone to stand in the gap in the wall so I wouldn't have to destroy the land, but I found no one. **31** So now I will pour out my fury on them, consuming them with the fire of my anger. I will heap on their heads the full penalty for all their sins. I, the Sovereign Lord, have spoken!"

INTRODUCTION

The rulers, priests, and prophets were all corrupt—the people responsible for safeguarding the holiness of the temple. Under such guidance, the house of Israel had become detestable. The Lord had chosen them as His holy people, and they had received His law; yet they had turned their backs on Him. As a result, Ezekiel prophesied of God's coming wrath, the vindication of His holiness.

- 1. The judgment of the people (Ezekiel 22:17-22).** A common biblical image is the crucible, with God refining His people like precious metals so that they become pure and holy (Malachi 3:3-4). In Ezekiel's prophecy, however, the focus was on the dross discarded. God would pour out His wrath upon His corrupt people. Those who continued to defy His holiness would find themselves discarded like the worthless metals that float to the surface when silver is refined in a furnace. They would go through the furnace, but they would not survive the refining process—there was no silver left (Isaiah 1:22). The city of Jerusalem would be destroyed by their enemies and cast among the nations (Deuteronomy 28:30-36).
- 2. The sin of the people (Ezekiel 22:23-29).** The violent depiction of God's wrath on His people may startle us. However, the house of Israel was guilty before the Lord. Ezekiel's prophecy listed the reasons why God would judge them. All of Israel's leaders—the princes, the priests, and the prophets—practiced injustice and profaned the law. God had given them chances to repent, yet

they refused and neglected their charge to guide the people. They lied about what God wanted, proclaiming a word from God when He had not spoken. They were worse than the nations, and God's people had become His enemies (Isaiah 1:24).

3. The need of the people (Ezekiel 22:30-31). Ezekiel revealed that the Lord had looked for someone to stand in the gap. This imagery refers to a breach in a wall. Israel needed someone to atone for their sins so that they could be holy. In the past, people such as Moses had stood in the gap (Psalms 106:23). It was also the role of the high priest, who was to guide the people in sacrifice (see Hebrews 5:1-3). When Ezekiel prophesied, there was no one to intercede. God did pour out His wrath on His people, but He left a remnant. He stepped into the gap. On the cross, Christ bore the wrath of God for us. God redeemed us for Himself by stepping in when no one else could (Isaiah 59:16-20).

PRACTICAL POINTS

No matter what anyone else thinks of you, it is God's estimation that counts (Ezek. 22:17-18).

God is patient, but He will judge sin (vss. 19-21).

God is good and is sometimes known through discipline (vs. 22).

Even one person can make a difference (vss. 30-31).

CONCLUSION

There is something about melting lead in a cast-iron pot. Old lead ingots with dirt, iron, and other particles go in. An intense fire heats the pot so that the temperature of the lead rises to over six hundred degrees. As the lead melts, the impurities rise. Then the impurities are skimmed off and discarded, revealing a molten pool of pure metal. Which best characterizes you—the metal being refined to purity, or the dross to be discarded?

QUESTION(S)

1. How did God emphasize that Ezekiel's message came from Him?

2. Why was God's judgment against Jerusalem so important?
3. What was shocking about God refining Jerusalem?
4. What would Jerusalem's walls represent in God's plan?
5. Why is the phrase "I the Lord" significant?
6. What was God's complaint against the prophets?
7. Why was God angry with the priests?
8. How were the princes described as warranting God's judgment?
9. Why was God incensed about the actions of His prophets?

Next week, we will study about how God's wrath is just. He is faithful to those who turn from their sins but He condemns those who sin.

"The Way of the Lord is Just" Ezekiel 33:12-20

Union Gospel Press, LifeStone