**STANDING IN THE GAP**

**Ezekiel 22:23 – 31**

**INTRODUCTION:**

1. Judah had turned her back on God and worshipped idols like backsliding Israel.

2. She failed to keep the Sabbaths, which were tokens of the covenant made with God.

3. Judah ***NO*** longer trusted God, **BUT** made alliances with foreign nations.

4. Ezekiel points out the sins of Jerusalem and her impending doom:

 A. Prophets made merchandise of the people (Eze 22:25, 28).

 B. Priests were violating ***NOT*** teaching the law (Eze 22:26).

 C. Civil rulers were like wolves after the sheep (Eze 22:27).

 D. People oppressed the poor and strangers (Eze 22:29).

5. God sought for a man to stand in the gap (Eze 22:30).

 A. To rebuke God's people for their sins; To stand against the tide of wickedness.

 B. To teach the truth in the midst of error; To prevent their destruction by a heathen nation.

6. **BUT** ***NO*** one would stand in the gap, so they experienced the wrath of God (Eze 22:30, 31).

7. Today’s gap between God and His People is due to an growing disregard for truth (3 Jn 1-4).

**BODY:**

**1. BEING CONTENT TO STAND ON THE SIDELINES ABANDONING STANDARDS**

 A. The essentiality of baptism, obedience, Bible authority, marriage/divorce/remarriage,

 a cappella singing, etc. are all facing bombardment from both (within and outside).

 1. Many are pre-occupied with worldly concerns

 A. Hag 1:2-6; Mt 6:19-21; Lk 8:14; 12:33; 2 Tim 4:10

 2. Many are thinking our cry is much ado about nothing.

 A. Legion is the number saying, “Leave it alone, it will die out” (Ac 5:33-39).

 B. “…envious of their success” (Mt 7:21-27; Rom 1:16; Gal 1:6-9; 2 Jn 9-11).

 C. Many have been heard saying, “Preach Jesus and leave issues alone”.

 1. How can this be done because to preach Jesus is to preach the “issues” He is

 concerned with (Hos 4:6; Ac 20:20, 26-27; Tit 3:10, 11).

 3. Many are waiting for others to stand up/stand in for them (Mt 16:24; Eph 6:10-17).

 4. Many are inviting the adversary to have his way, thinking it is for the best.

 A. God's way is BEST (Jos 24:14-16; Pro 3:5-7; 14:12; Jer 10:23)

**2. WHO SHOULD BE STANDING IN THE GAP?**

 A. Those who love God and His Word (Jer 20:8, 9; 2 Cor 5:14, 15).

 B. Those having the HOPE to benefit from the truth.

 1. Preachers (1 Cor 9:14); Brotherhood schools (Gal 6:6; 2 Tim 2:2).

 C. All who have OBEYED the truth (Lk 6:46; 17:11-19; Jn 8:31, 32; 17:17).

 D. Elders (Tit 1:9; Heb 13:17).

 E. Teachers/Instructors (1 Tim 1:3; 4:16; Jas 3:1).

 F. Parents and Children (Eph 6:1-4; 2 Tim 1:3-5; 3:14, 15).

**3. WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF *NOT* STANDING IN THE GAP?**

 A. Compromise of the TRUTH (1 Tim 4:1-4).

 B. Abandonment of the TRUTH (2 Tim 4:1-3).

 C. Increase of UNGODLINESS (Rom 1:18-32).

 D. Indignation and wrath of ALMIGHTY GOD (Rom 2:7-11).