

"Stand In The Gap"

Introduction. In Ezekiel 13:1-24:7, the prophet presents the Lord's case against Judah. The specific section of 22:1-30 describes Jerusalem as a city of bloodshed, a city of idolatry (vss. 1-4). God asks them in vs. 14, "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee?" The obvious answer was NO!

Instead of moving directly to pronounce judgment, God declares that He looked for a man to "stand in the gap" (vs. 30). A "gap" is a breach, mostly in a wall (1 Kings 11:27; Nehemiah 6:1), although the word can be used metaphorically (Judges 21:15; Isaiah 58:12; Amos 9:11). Winston Churchill said, "This is no time for ease and comfort. It is the time to dare and endure." Let's look deeper into the concept of "standing in the gap."

I. **God's Search**

- A. None of those responsible in one way or another for leading the people to greater holiness (prince, priest, official, prophet, landowner) was fit for the task (22:23-29). The leaders had abandoned Him and His covenant.
- B. We have distinguished examples of those who "stood in the gap."
 1. Abraham (Genesis 18:16-33).
 2. Moses (Exodus 32:11-14; 30-34; Deuteronomy 9:25-29; Psalm 106:23).
 3. Samuel (1 Samuel 7:5-9; 12:19-25).
 4. Esther (Esther 5:1-3).
- C. Of course, Jesus is the finest example because He "stood in the gap" for us (Hebrews 1:3; 7:25).

II. **Our Response**

- A. Present our bodies as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2).
 1. The world needs good examples of those who will stand fast (Luke 1:6; 1 Corinthians 16:13; Ephesians 5:7-8).
 - a) Sacrifices in the Old Testament were to be spotless (Exodus 12:5; Leviticus 1:3).
 - b) In the same way, we are to be spotless (Ephesians 1:4; 2 Peter 3:14).
 2. It is necessary to be faithful in service (Romans 6:11-12; 1 Corinthians 4:2, 17; Revelation 17:14).
 - a) One who is faithful is "trustworthy, dependable, or reliable."
 - b) If you had something that only worked half of the time, would you call it "faithful"? Could God call you "faithful"?

- B. Preach the word in and out of season (2 Timothy 4:2).
 - 1. Saving souls (Luke 10:2; Acts 8:4).
 - 2. Restoring the fallen and those in error (Galatians 6:1; Jude 3-4, 22-23).
- C. Share our blessings through benevolence (Galatians 6:10).
 - 1. Hospitality shows great graciousness (Luke 14:12-14; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8; 1 Peter 4:9; 3 John 5-8).
 - 2. The rich are commanded to do good with their riches (1 Timothy 6:17-18).

Conclusion. The search was a gesture of grace which shows God's true heart (cf. Amos 4:6-11). What will He find when He searches you? Will He be disappointed? Are you willing to stand in the gap to save yourself and some others? Our upcoming gospel meeting is a great moment in time to go forth with "great boldness" to do what we need to do (2 Corinthians 3:12).

On the brink of the calamity in 586 B.C., God searched high and low for one person to proclaim justice in the midst of perversity and He found no one (Jeremiah 5:1-6). Theodore Roosevelt said, "Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the grey twilight that knows not victory nor defeat."