

## Standing in the Gap

Text: Ezekiel 22:23-31

Introduction: *The dire situation in Judah*

1. This is God's final message to Judah before the fall of Jerusalem (22-23)
2. The nation had become totally corrupt – from top to bottom (vs. 24).
3. The prophets lied (vs. 25, 28).
4. The priests defiled (vs. 26).
5. The princes destroyed (vs. 27).
6. The people oppressed (vs. 29).
7. God sought for someone to stand in the gap...

I. The Hedge: Defense (Ezekiel 22:30)

- A. The word for 'hedge' refers to an enclosure – fence or wall (cf. Job 1:10).

**Job 1:10**

10 Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

- B. A wall around a city is designed for protection and defense.
- C. To be effective it must be solid and strong; thus, any breaches must be repaired (cf. Nehemiah 6:1).

**Nehemiah 6:1**

1 Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;)

II. The Gap: Danger (2 Samuel 5:20)

- A. When there is a gap in the wall, danger is present.
- B. David used the imagery of a breaking flood or water breaching a dam.

**2 Samuel 5:20**

20 And David came to Baalperazim, and David smote them there, and said, The LORD hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place Baalperazim.

- C. Broken walls are a danger (cf. Nehemiah 1:3; Psalm 80:12).

### Nehemiah 1:3

3 And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

### Psalms 80:12

12 Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?

### III. The Breach: Destruction (2 Samuel 6:8)

- A. The word for 'gap' refers to a breach; literally, a breaking forth.
- B. The breach upon Uzzah was a breaking forth of God's judgment and punishment (cf. Exodus 19:22, 24; Judges 21:15; Job 16:14; Psalm 106:29; Isaiah 5:5).

### 2 Samuel 6:8

8 And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place Perezuzzah to this day.

### Exodus 19:21-22

21 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish.

22 And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them.

### Exodus 19:24

24 And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them.

### Judges 21:15

15 And the people repented them for Benjamin, because that the LORD had made a breach in the tribes of Israel.

### Job 16:14

14 He breaketh me with breach upon breach, he runneth upon me like a giant.

### Psalms 106:29

29 Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions: and the plague

brake in upon them.

Isaiah 5:5

5 And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:

- C. God wanted someone to stand in the gap to prevent His judgment against Judah! (Cf. Genesis 18:32; 39:5; Psalm 106:23)

Genesis 18:32

32 And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.

Genesis 39:5

5 And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.

Psalms 106:23

23 Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.

2 Peter 3:9

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

- D. Who will stand in the gap (Jeremiah 5:1; Ezekiel 13:5; 22:30)?

Jeremiah 5:1

1 Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it.

Ezekiel 13:5

5 Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the LORD.

Application: *Standing in the Gap*

1. Where are the elders who will stand in the gap? – prayer, protection, and leadership
2. Where are the preachers who will stand in the gap? – without compromise, with boldness
3. Where are the Christians who will stand in the gap? – prayer, example, and evangelism
4. One who stands in the gap will be attacked (Nehemiah 4:7-8; 1 Kings 11:27).

**Nehemiah 4:7-8**

7 But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth,

8 And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it.

**1 Kings 11:27**

27 And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king: Solomon built Millo, and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father.

5. It is only in the Lord's church that the breaches are repaired and salvation can be found (Amos 9:11; Acts 15:15-17).

**Amos 9:11**

11 In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old:

**Acts 15:15-17**

15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.