

TEXT: Ezekiel 14:14 (also vs. 20)

TITLE: *THREE OT EXAMPLES OF LOYALTY AND RIGHTEOUSNESS*

BIG IDEA:

GODLY EXAMPLES REINFORCE OUR DEVOTION TO GOD FOR HIS DELIVERANCE FROM DANGER

INTRODUCTION:

Context: God promising to bring 4 judgments upon Jerusalem – even the intercession of the most godly men could not avert that judgment; yet we want to learn from the example of these 3 men whom God picked out to emphasize their loyalty and righteousness

Ezek. 14:14, 20 *“even though these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job were in its midst, by their own righteousness they could only deliver themselves”*
(cf. **Jer. 15:1** and a similar reference to **Moses** and **Samuel**)

Remember that the context in Ezekiel 14:14 is not that of personal salvation – but we can speak to that by way of application:

EVEN THE MOST RIGHTEOUS OF MEN CANNOT JUSTIFY THE UNGODLY (BECAUSE OF THEIR OWN SIN) – ONLY THE PERFECT SON OF GOD CAN JUSTIFY THE UNGODLY

- All of us are bankrupt of any righteousness of our own in God’s sight that would justify us

“there is none righteous, no not one”

“all of our righteousness is as filthy rags”

- We need the righteousness of God applied to our account by personal faith
- You cannot rely on any godly association with family, friends, churches, prayers, etc.
- Jesus Christ alone is our righteousness – able to justify the ungodly
- Having received God’s righteousness we can now perform good works that glorify God – We should now be examples of loyalty and righteousness to others

What can we learn from these three godly examples?

I. NOAH – LOYALTY AND RIGHTEOUSNESS WHILE PROCLAIMING GOD’S COMING JUDGMENT TO AN UNGODLY WORLD AND GRACIOUS OFFER OF DELIVERANCE – BUT NO ESCAPE APART FROM REPENTANCE

A. Danger He Faced = Wrath of God poured out in worldwide flood; Pressure and Persecution from a corrupt and wicked society

B. Deliverance God Provided = Ark of Salvation

- exclusive path of salvation
- urgency to enter the ark before God shut the door

C. Devotion to God in Loyalty and Righteousness Exemplified

- fellowship with God
- family leadership
- bold testimony – continued to preach to those around him
- hero of faith – took a long time to prepare the ark; had never seen a worldwide flood
- hard worker – labored for many years to build the ark

Gen. 6:8-9 *“Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord . . . Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.”*

7:1 *“for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time.”*

Heb 11:7 *“By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.”*

2 Pet 2:5 *“and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly”*

II. DANIEL – LOYALTY AND RIGHTEOUSNESS WHILE FAITHFULLY MAINTAINING A TESTIMONY TO THE TRUE GOD IN THE MIDST OF THE PRESSURES OF EXILE IN A FOREIGN LAND

A. Danger He Faced = Lion’s Den for unwillingness to worship the king; Envy and Jealousy of king’s counselors who were trying to incriminate Daniel

B. Deliverance God Provided = Shut the mouths of the lions

C. Devotion to God in Loyalty and Righteousness Exemplified

- Maintained personal physical discipline – did not eat the unhealthy foods
- Maintained personal spiritual discipline -- Practiced daily devotions – prayer and worship
- Maintained walk of separation from sin and idolatry – No compromise
- Grew in Wisdom and Knowledge
- Blessed with Administrative Skill

Known for his wisdom (**Ezek. 28:3**) *“you are wiser than Daniel”*

Dan. 6:26-28 *“I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; For He is the living God and enduring forever, and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed. And His dominion will be forever. He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”*

III. JOB – LOYALTY AND RIGHTEOUSNESS WHILE ENDURING THE EXTREMES OF SEVERE SUFFERING THAT MIGHT SEEM INCONSISTENT WITH THE GOODNESS AND FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

A. Danger He Faced = Direct Attack by Satan to try to make him renounce his allegiance to God; Coupled with unwise counsel from his wife and friends who wrongly interpreted his sufferings as evidence of sin and God’s displeasure

B. Deliverance God Provided = Endurance and Subsequent Blessing

C. Devotion to God in Loyalty and Righteousness Exemplified

Job 1:1 *“that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil”*

(1:8 – testimony of God to Satan about Job’s character)

1:21-22 *“‘Blessed be the name of the Lord.’ Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.”*

2:3 *“And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause.”*

2:10 *“Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?”*

34:5 *“For Job has said, ‘I am righteous, but God has taken away my right’”*

James 5:10-11 *“As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord’s dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.”*

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

MacArthur: The 3 OT heroes mentioned in this section exhibited power in intercession on behalf of others (cf. Ge 6:18; Job 42:7-10; Da 1, 2) at strategic points in redemptive history, and even they could not deliver anyone but themselves if they were there praying earnestly. Even the presence and prayers of the godly could not stop the coming judgment. Genesis 18:22-32 and Jer 5:1-4 provide rare exceptions to the principle that one man’s righteousness is no protection for others.

Feinberg: According to Jeremiah (7:16; 15:1-4) even Moses and Samuel, well known for their power in intercessory prayer, would not avail to deliver the doomed city of

Jerusalem and her people (see Exodus 32:11-14; Num. 14:13-20; I Sam. 7:8-12).

Michael A. Carling: Noah, Daniel, Job

These 3 men were not contemporaries, so it was a hypothetical situation. They could not have saved Jerusalem from God's judgment. Maybe if they had been there personally or if they had interceded in prayer – but even then it would have been of no avail. Eternal salvation is not being discussed here – no one can save themselves. Context is being saved from judgment because of unrighteous behavior. Review their virtues:

Noah – pattern of godly fear; heedless of ridicule about him; how they must have laughed at him; preacher of righteousness for 120 years; great perseverance;

Daniel -- greatly loved by God; think of his integrity in his youth – would not defile himself by eating the king's rich food; pattern of prayer; strict in obeying God's laws

Job – God's servant; feared God and abstained from evil; perfect and upright;

Even if one or all 3 of these men interceded on behalf of Jerusalem it would not have mattered; their presence would be no advantage; Their outstanding character would deliver them only from these judgments

Application to realm of eternal salvation: every one of us shall give an account to God; you cannot look to godly family members or friends as any advantage to your salvation; your godly heritage will give you no merits to secure your salvation; it is a great advantage to be raised in a godly family and have godly friends and associate with a godly church – but that will not secure your salvation

Examples: [remember also sons of Eli]

1) **Lev 10:** two sons of Aaron (brother of Moses) offered strange fire before the Lord and were judged; not what God had commanded; burnt to a crisp; you can't come to God with your own ideas of worship; Aaron knew that God was right;

2) **2 Sam. 18:12, 33** – David had a favorite son = Absalom – killed by Joab; David would have died for his own son but could not deliver him from death

3) **Gen. 4** – Cain, had a godly brother = Abel; didn't save him or even influence him a whole lot;

4) **Gen. 17:15ff** – Ishmael whose father was Abraham (father of the faithful); became type of those who do not inherit the blessings of the children of promise (Isaac);

5) **Gen. 27:32ff** – Esau, child of godly Isaac; Rom. 9

Must be born from above, of God – not from human heritage or bloodline;

"If you continue in my Word, then are you my disciples indeed" – not continue in association with whoever

Context of Ezekiel 14 – there is yet hope; there is a remnant – vs. 22 – in His wrath, He remembered mercy; **Mark 1:15** – *Repent and believe the gospel* (not: rely on your godly pedigree)