



# STAND IN THE

# GAP



## Southwest **BRETHREN** C O N F E R E N C E

2013 Southwest Brethren Conference • June 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> • Dallas, Texas

*Greetings! 2013 Southwest Brethren Conference is few weeks away, should the Lord Jesus tarry, and will be held in Dallas, Texas. We are looking forward to what the Lord will do in our hearts as the Word is opened and souls are encouraged. If you haven't had the pleasure of going to a southwest brethren conference before, perhaps this is the year that the Lord is opening the door for you to attend. Please also pray for hearts that are being prepared to receive what He will give. We would appreciate your prayers for the conference and the preparations leading up to it.*

*"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."*

*(New Living Translation, ©2007)*



Br. Binu Ninan

This is a very timely passage that may be applied to any believing community of God's people living in this corrupt world system that is openly defiant toward God's authority. However, please consider with me whether or not this passage has any other specific bearing on us as God's believing community.

Judgment from God is not unfamiliar to the reader of Scripture. Without question, God's cup of wrath does fill up and His judgments do come on the sinful, godless nations. Before God created humans in His own image, one-third of the angelic spirit beings (*created with immense power and intelligence, emotion, will, and personality*) were judged for rebellion against God. Paradise was lost when God's judgment came on Adam and Eve's disobedience when they gave ear to the enemy of God speaking through a serpent. Judgment of annihilation by water came on the antediluvians whose thoughts were continually evil due to both their own sinful nature coupled with voluntary, intimate relationship with evil angelic beings identified as the "sons of God" in Gen. 6:2. God's judgment quickly comes on the new world due to Babel's false and idolatrous religion. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were judged for their sexual perversions. Egypt and its Pharaoh were judged when God brought His people out of slavery with a mighty arm. Now God was ready to judge the inhabitants of the land promised to Abraham. In Genesis 15, God ratifies or "cuts" the covenant that He had made with Abraham back in chapter 12. Of the ten people-groups or nations mentioned in Gen. 15:19-21, God says that the sin of one people-group (*the Amorites*) is not yet complete. After four hundred years, their sin was complete and God's judgment came on these godless and perverse inhabitants of the Promised Land. Consider the patience of God as He waits hundreds and hundreds of years as people live in open rebellion toward their Creator and their Judge. His judgments are indeed just and right...But His mercy is so far beyond our comprehension. The remainder of Moses' Pentateuch as well as the prophetic books of Scripture spell out further judgments on the nations of the world that have come to pass (*from our perspective*) and that which will take place in a future time period called the **Day of the LORD**.

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April 2013

God's judgment is not restricted to godless nations. His judgments against His own nation, Israel, are proof that God makes no exceptions when it comes to sin and rebellion against His holy character. The Israelites knew God's character as passed down orally as well as revealed progressively through God's inspiration yielding in written Scriptures. Throughout the Old Testament as well as in real time, we see God's disciplinary judgments at various stages in the life of this nation starting from the forty years of wilderness wandering to its present dispersal among the nations of the earth who not only have an anti-Zionistic agenda but would like to wipe the Jewish race off the face of the earth if possible (*even though Israel was allowed to declare itself an independent state in 1948, it is still not recognized as such by its neighboring countries even to this day*).

Our passage in Ezekiel is found amidst a context of impending judgment from God. While in exile, Ezekiel is called to minister as a prophet to his fellow exiles (*chapters 1-3*). Due to assurance by false prophets, the exiles are very confident that Jerusalem will not be destroyed completely and that they will soon return to their land of Judah. Ezekiel pronounces sure judgment and future ruin of Jerusalem and the inhabitants of Judah in chapters 4 to 24. Chapters 25 to 29 speak of God's retribution to the nations. After this, the prophet turns to comfort the people and tells them of God's provision for repentance and future restoration of Jerusalem and the temple (*chapters 33 to 48*). You will remember that the defeat of Judah and the destruction of Jerusalem came in three phases. First, in 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and deported a large group of captives, including Daniel, to Babylon. Then by 597 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar again defeated Jerusalem and deported another ten thousand more captives, including Ezekiel, to Babylon. A decade later, 586 B.C., the Babylonians again invaded Judah and completely destroyed Jerusalem and deported the survivors to Babylon.

Our passage helps fill in the answer to the question, **"Why did God completely destroy Jerusalem?"** In chapter 22 of Ezekiel, the LORD clarifies one of the primary reasons for the fast approaching judgment. It was for the sins of the present generation of the people of Judah, especially the leaders. Ezekiel indicts the people for covenant unfaithfulness (22:1-16), for which there would be a coming refining (22:17-22). His message also points out that this judgment is in large part due to corrupt leadership (22:23-31). Corrupt leadership came from (1) false prophets who ruthlessly took advantage

of the people (22:25); (2) priests who abused the Mosaic Law and did not make a distinction between what was consecrated and what was common (22:26); and (3) Judah's princes (nobles or officials) who like vicious wolves, working together with the false prophets, attacked and abused the people to get what belonged to them (22:27-28). As a result, even the ordinary citizens oppressed, stole, and took advantage of the poor, the needy, and foreigners (22:29). Note that it was at this point in their disobedience and rebellion as a nation that the LORD *"looked for one of the Judahites who would lead a reformation that would defend the people from God's judgment, but He could not find anyone. Building up the wall and standing in the gap formed by a breach in the wall were appropriate figures for fortifying the people in their hour of need."* (Dr. Constable's Notes on Ezekiel, pg. 117, [www.soniclight.com](http://www.soniclight.com)).

Is God saying that there wasn't even one righteous person that cared to stand against the sins of Judah? Certainly, there were righteous men like Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah who were in Judah during its last years as a nation. The LORD said that no one righteous person could deliver the unfaithful nation from judgment by his own righteousness; not even Noah, Daniel, or Job (*Ezek. 14*). You will remember what the children of Israel said when they assembled before God at the foot of Mt. Sinai. "Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, 'All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!' So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, 'behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.'" (*Exod. 24:7,8*). When a covenant was made and then ratified or "cut", the animals were cut into two indicating that the same will be done to the one who breaks the covenant. You will also remember the incident where the LORD sought to kill Moses. While it was the duty of the father to keep the sign of the covenant by the rite of circumcision, it was Zipporah who made the connection by realizing the threat and quickly circumcised their son (*Exod. 4:24-26*). When the LORD stated that He could not find any one to stand in the gap, it was the gap made by breach of covenant, which by this time could only be satisfied by death. Essentially, the LORD speaks to the exiles in Babylon and says that Jerusalem will be destroyed because the whole nation of Judah has broken or breached their covenant with God so overwhelmingly that no one individual is able to stand in the breach or repair it or turn the people back to God before judgment comes. We know that



Moses on a few occasions, stood in the gap. Moses pleaded with God and God stayed His punishment by not annihilating the children of Israel in the desert. Here, in Ezekiel, God says that none by his own righteousness will deliver Judah from total destruction.

**What timeless principle or truth do we learn from our focal passage in Ezekiel 22:30?** What is the literal meaning of the context of our text? It tells us plainly that God looks for those leaders who recognize their sin and the people's sin and begin to repent and repair and rectify the wrong that has been done toward God and the people. It also tells us that sin and rebellion can only continue so long and then God's judgment will come no matter what.

**How do we who are Gentile New Testament believers apply the timeless truth found in this passage?** Always remember that there is only one meaning or timeless truth/principle that can be found or derived when interpreting any given passage of Scripture. However, there can be several applications of that truth. We know that Jesus Christ is the one who stood in the gap between our sins and God's righteous judgment and suffered God's wrath on our behalf two thousand years ago on a hill far away called Calvary. We who walk in the Spirit and not according to the flesh know that we will face no condemnation because we are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1). As believers in Christ, we will not face the judgment and wrath that will be poured out the ungodly who do not know the LORD. However, our LORD will discipline us when we sin so that we will not be condemned with the world (1 Cor. 11:32).

**So, how do we apply the truth of this passage? What does it mean to "stand in the gap"? Does God look for you and me to "stand in the gap"? Can you and I "stand in the gap"?** We who are God's redeemed people are not a perfect group. (*Even if it was perfect, it wasn't anymore after I got there!*) Suffice it to say that we are all sinners by nature. As we grow closer to God through the graces of prayer, His Word, the indwelling Truth-Teacher, and edification and fellowship among believers, we begin to understand the areas of our sin on a personal as well as on a corporate level. A believer who is appropriating these God-given graces for life and godliness will be convicted of where he himself or where his assembly has missed the mark that was set by God. We will know where we have sinned and breached or broken trust with our LORD. We need to make it right quickly by confessing (*admitting the same error that God's Spirit has*

*already convinced you of*) the sin. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." We often apply this passage in 1st John just on a personal level. We should also apply it on an assembly level. If an assembly along with its leaders do not accept and confess sin or fail to show true repentance, the LORD will discipline as He sees fit. 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 gives an apt example of continual unrepentant sin committed by an assembly. Ezekiel 22:30 is definitely applicable to our personal life as well as to our assemblies today. For example, when an assembly has missed God's mark or has failed to live by God's will as pertaining to any matter of Christian living that has been revealed in the New Testament Scriptures, God looks for people, especially the leaders, to stand in the gap or breach of righteousness and repent of what has happened. Then the LORD expects for these leaders to repair the breach and turn the people back to the right understanding of God's will. If this repentance and repair does not happen within a time that is set by the LORD, He will begin the discipline process that will refine and purify the assembly. This refining will be uncomfortable and painful on many levels so that we will learn what the LORD wants to teach us. Only by doing things the right way as prescribed in Scripture will we bring glory to our LORD. If righteousness exalts a nation, righteousness must exalt any assembly.

Though there are several other applications of the timeless truth found in our passage in Ezekiel, I feel the need of the hour is for the leaders of our assemblies to rise up and stand in the widening gap which is a breach of trust and faith in God's timeless truths found in His Word. May God give us understanding to steer clear of wrong interpretations that would lead to false and legalistic doctrines, discernment to know the difference between what matters to Him and what He could care less about, and humility and patience to learn from Him and serve His flock with integrity in life and motive. May we faithfully stand in the gap for our present and future generation and thereby bring on us the LORD's pleasure and not His punishment.

## COME A WAKE

[www.comeawake.org](http://www.comeawake.org)

Awake, O sleeper. And Christ will shine on you. reaching out to those in need of Love and Hope, ministering to broken hearts, crushed spirits, lost souls.

B L O G





## Conference Rates

### Package 1

Friday to Sunday (2 nights & meals)

Family of 4 (adults) .....	\$420
3 adults.....	\$345
2 adult.....	\$270
1 adult.....	\$199

**\$350 per family**  
for the weekend.  
(Price include 2 adults  
and 2 children)

### Package 2

Saturday & Sunday (First meal is Sat Dinner, check in time 3pm)

Family of 4 (adults) .....	\$210
3 adults.....	\$170
2 adults.....	\$130
1 adult.....	\$ 99

Children Under 4 Free. Ages 4 to 10 Half Price

## Conference Contacts

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Coordinators

Baby Jacob - Oklahoma

Cherian Abraham - Houston

Roji Varghese - Youth & Children's

### Talent Hour

Those who are interested in participating in the talent hour, please contact Br. Alexander Daniel at (281) 935-6354 before May 31<sup>st</sup> and submit your requests, (10 minutes per assembly).

**Conference begins on Friday 3:45 p.m.** ends at noon on Sunday. We encourage you to participate in all sessions throughout the conference.

**Registration begins 1 p.m. on Friday.**

**Hotel check in begins at 3 p.m.**

### Sterling Hotel Dallas

Sterling Hotel Dallas offers 363 comfortable guest rooms, featuring either king size bed or two double beds. Traditional and eclectic classic in style, Sterling Hotel Dallas offers some of the most unique lodging accommodations in the Dallas area and boasts outstanding value.

## Registration Fee:

Commuter's \$20 Per Person,  
Hotel: Family \$25, Individual \$10.

Everyone attending the conference must be registered. Hotel law requires all participants to be registered even if you are not staying at the hotel.



REGISTER ONLINE

### Special Packages (per person & No Hotel rooms)

Lunch & Registration \$45

Lunch, Dinner & Registration \$80

Full meals & Registration only \$90

**Hotel Rooms only:** \$65 Per Day (including tax)

**Individual Meals:** Lunch \$15, Dinner \$17

Register online at [www.brethrenconference.org](http://www.brethrenconference.org)



## Upcoming Events

### GALILEE 2013

Three-week training program for young adults from July 20 to August 9, 2013, to be held in Lafayette, Louisiana. • [www.galileeprogram.com](http://www.galileeprogram.com)

### Southwest Elders Conference

August 24- 25th Bethesda Bible Chapel - Irving • [www.sweldersconf.com](http://www.sweldersconf.com)

### Dallas Area CMML Missions Conference

October 19, 2013 - Believes Bible Chapel, Carrollton. • [www.cmml.us](http://www.cmml.us)

### IBF 2013

July 3 - July 7, 2013 • [www.ibfus.org](http://www.ibfus.org)

### FIBA 2013

August 1 - August 4, 2011 • [www.fibana.com](http://www.fibana.com)