

PASTOR SCOTT: Hey, Freshwater. That song, "King of Kings," the chorus is very simple. It's a call to worship. It's a call to praise the King of Kings. Praise the Father. Praise the Son. Praise the Spirit, three in one. It's something God's people have done for centuries, right, millennia. We gather, and we praise the King of Kings. Even as we do this, the reality is, this world, a large proportion of this world, refuses to do this. In fact, not just refuses, but has antagonism, a resistance.

The psalmist says this, "Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed."

What's been going on throughout the history of the world is this pattern of nations raging against God, raging against Him, plotting, scheming, trying to do this without him, trying to deny Him, and really coming against Him and those who would follow Him.

You may say, "Wow, that's an intense beginning, like, holy cow, jump into the deep end here." What's going on, as we jump into today's message, we're in Ezekiel, and we're in chapters 25 through 32. It is all about nations who have raged against God, people who have raged against God, rulers and authorities, kings and counselors, and all these people that rage against God.

What does rage look like, like the rage of nations? It's scary, like it's really scary. The rage of nations is an embrace of wickedness and evil, against God, against how he would have us live and against how he'd have leaders and nations rule. It is against his righteousness and plan.

I remember growing up just being scared. Some of you my age remember actually having the bomb drills, like the nuclear bomb drills at school. We would hide under desks which, to me, I remember even doing that going, aren't the bombs, like, so powerful, they would blow the school up? I mean, that just kind of -- I don't mean to freak anybody out. Sorry if you're younger. It's so far away from us now.

I remember that, being scared of Russia. Maybe some of you are growing up, and you're scared of the 9/11 terrorists, or a country that's going to come over here. I think, nowadays, what's going on, we just watched the "Free Burma" fighters again, the documentary, and watching the government of Myanmar just kill people, innocent people. It's just staggering to watch the amount of people killed.

Then they jumped over to Iraq and watching Mosul and the terrorists and ISIS that were sniping little kids, moms and dads. I mean, we were watching it on there. You want to talk about rage of nations, that's what this is, right? It's pure evil.

North Africa, literally, North Africa is given over to extreme Islam, and just the murder, the kidnapping. We were praying with a couple of international workers this past week; two pastors in Mali were just kidnapped this past week. They have no idea what's going to happen to them. It's those kinds of things. The war lords over in Ethiopia. We have it here in our country, the corruption. It's scary to see what people will do with power or for power.

The greed, the level of lying and deception. I don't care what party you're in. It's happening in both, and it's scary. We have governors who say, "There is no God," and you sense the animosity and hatred.

And I think, growing up, I mean, some of you kids, students in junior high, high school, you're going to brush up against this. You're going to see more and more the rage of nations, and you're going to see more and more the rage of rulers and leaders and counselors who would come against God and come against his people. Part of this, if maybe you're newer in your faith, part of this message, I think, is what does God do about all of this, and what do we think about this? What should we think as we see this happen, especially when you see it happen and you don't see justice? You don't see anything; it seems like God is silent.

These few moments, we're going to look at God and his judgment of nations. If you're newer to the faith, if you don't know Ezekiel -- and we've been going through this and will go ahead and finish -- I'll catch you up to speed on Ezekiel. The first -- Ezekiel comes in this moment when Israel, the southern kingdom, was being destroyed, was conquered and ultimately destroyed.

Let me back up. 950 BC, Israel is united, everything is hunky-dory. In there, everybody starts hating each other and they split. It was a civil war. It was more civil, nobody got killed. Northern kingdom and southern kingdom. Northern kingdom had ten tribes. They just started to wander away from God. God sent prophets over 150 years, and they just kept going further and further away from God, starting to rage against God, as it were, disobey God, reject God.

Finally, God says, "Okay, that's it," and he sends in Assyria and conquers the northern kingdom. Southern kingdom, with the two tribes, is still devoted to God, and then they have their slow decline. We have some revivals, but God sends prophets. They don't listen to prophets; they end up going off the cliff of morality and wickedness. It is really bad.

God sends Babylon 600 BC. Babylon conquers the southern kingdom, Judah. Couple years later, Judah fancies herself, thinks, we're going to throw Babylon off, so Babylon comes back and utterly erases Jerusalem to the ground. The temple, the walls, the palace, everything is destroyed. We find that in Ezekiel. So Ezekiel is this prophet that comes after Babylon is conquered, Judah. His prophecies are not about, "Hey, repent, because God will stop his punishment."

The prophecies are all, "Punishment is here. Judgment is here. It's judgment day. This is going to be really bad, and this is why I'm doing it." So you see that up through Ezekiel 24. The first 24 chapters are all about that. Then 25 comes, and God then starts to address all these nations who have been raging against him for all these years. So we're going to go through eight chapters here; seven nations in eight chapters. We're just going to look at what God says and how he views and what's going on behind the scenes in his mind as nations rage against him, as people rise up against his people who follow him, who say to him he's the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

So we see his response to the rage of nations. It starts in chapter 25. First nation is Ammon. He says here in verse 3, "Thus says the Lord God, because you said, 'Aha!' Over my sanctuary when it was profaned, and over the land of Israel when it was made desolate, and over the house of Judah when they went into exile," and they're saying this when Babylon

came and conquered them. When they said, "Aha," right, over all this. He goes on in verse 6, "Because you've clapped your hands and stamped your feet and rejoiced with all malice within your soul against the land of Israel."

His accusation is against them, as they're celebrating the demise of Israel. They're loving it, and it is malice. It is like you wish evil. You wish pain. You wish harm on somebody. Like, they're loving it, "Do it, kill them." He says, "Because of this, I will cut you off from the peoples. I will make you perish out of the countries. I will destroy you."

His judgment is very clear, "Because you celebrated the destruction of my people, I'm going to judge you." Ammon is the first one. The next one is Moab and Seir. Seir was a mountain range. Moab is a country, and Seir is a mountain range. They see it together with Moab. His accusations to Moab and Seir is this, "Behold, the house of Judah," this is what they were saying, right?

"Because Moab and Seir," in verse 8, "said, 'Behold, the house of Judah is like all the other nations,' therefore." So the accusation is this, they're saying, "Israel is just like all the other nations."

What's interesting, if you read earlier in Ezekiel, God is saying the same thing to the Israelites, "You're like the other nations," but God's accusation is, "You shouldn't be, but you guys are going down this trail of wickedness. You're raging against me, disobeying me, embracing idolatry."

What they're saying is something different. What they mean is Israel isn't chosen by God. Israel doesn't have God in their midst. The name of God on them. This is all such a joke. God was ticked off. He was so mad. So he says this, "I will lay open the flank of Moab from the cities, from its cities on the frontier, the glory of the country."

And then the other cities I can't mention -- I can't say; I can't pronounce. "I will give it to the Ammonites, to the people of the east."

The people of the east is Babylon. Babylon is going to come into this over and over again as he mentions judgment. Babylon becomes this tool that God uses to judge all these nations. The nation from the east is Babylon.

He says, "I'm going to give it to the people to the east as a possession, that the Ammonites may be remembered no more among the nations."

The next nation is this prophesy against Edom. Now, Edom has two different prophesies. There's one here. If you fast forward, fast forward up to chapter 35, there is this other prophesy against Edom, but it says Mount Seir. There is a mountain range called Seir mountain range, but there is a mountain called Mt. Seir. Mt. Seir is part of the Edom kingdom or the nation of Edom. It is a symbol for them.

So there's several different accusations that come against Edom. What's interesting -- you have to know this -- Edom is direct relatives to Israel. Edom is from Esau, the grandson of Abraham. So you have Abraham, has a son, Isaac. Isaac has two sons there in the beginning, Jacob and Esau. Jacob is the younger one, steals the birthright from Esau.

Esau was an idiot and gave it up. That's another story you can read in Genesis.

Jacob gets the birthright, and Esau gets this curse that says, you and your people are always going to be ticked off and wanting to try to get this inheritance back. You're just going to be bitter and fight. That's Scott Brooks' summary of it, but that's essentially what this is.

There is bad blood between Edom and Israel. So here, start to read this, and with that in mind, you'll hear these accusations. He says this in verse 12, "Because Edom acted revengefully against the house of Judah and has grievously offended in taking vengeance on them."

For what? Yeah, the birthright, maybe. Chapter 35:5, it says, "Because you cherished perpetual enmity" -- goes back to Jacob and Esau -- "and gave over the people of Israel to the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, at the time of their final punishment."

He goes on, verse 10, "These two nations" -- the northern kingdom, Israel; southern kingdom, Judah, "The two nations and countries shall be mine. We'll take possession of them -- although the Lord was there." He says, "I've heard all the revilings going on" -- down to verse 12, "You have uttered against the mountains of Israel, saying, 'They're laid desolate; they are given to us to devour.' You magnified against me with your mouth and multiplied your words against me."

This is God's accusation against them. He starts to, in 35, say his judgment. Here, he says, "Therefore, I will stretch out my hand against Edom and cut off from it man and beast. I will make it desolate," and he goes on to explain more. The third nation is Philistia. This is the long-time enemy of Israel. Think Goliath, David and Goliath. No blood relation here, they just hate Israel. God says, "Because you acted revengefully and took vengeance with malice of soul" -- another moment of malice -- "to destroy in never-ending enmity."

When Philistines saw Babylon come in, they piled on Jerusalem. They didn't just want revenge, they wanted genocide. They wanted to kill every single Jew that was living.

God says, "For that, I am going to stretch out my hand against the Philistines. I will execute great vengeance on them and wrathful rebukes." That's four nations that have raged against God and raged against his people. There's a fifth nation, the nation of Tyre. The nation of Tyre, it gets three chapters. That's a real bummer. Like, that's something you don't want to have happen, like, when God starts to talk judgment, and everybody else is getting a paragraph or two, and you get three pages, or three chapters, like this is really bad.

His accusation against them -- there are two main accusations. One against the nation, chapter 26. You see that in 27, the nation thing. Chapter 28 is very specific towards the prince, or the king. The princes and the kings, the rulers.

Chapter 26 says this in verse 2, "This is what you guys said. This is -- Tyre said this, 'Aha, the gate of the peoples is broken. It's swung open to me. I shall be replenished, now that she's laid waste.'"

They weren't going to come in and kill people; they were going to plunder Jerusalem. That was their goal. God says, "This is what I'm going to do to you: I am going to destroy the walls of Tyre, break down her towers. I'm going to scrape her soil from her. I'm going to make her a bare rock. She shall be in the midst of the sea a place for the spreading of nets,

for I've spoken, declares the Lord. She shall become plunder for the nations, and her daughters on the mainland shall be killed." He goes on to talk about this.

Guess who shows up again. It's Babylon, verse 7. King of Babylon is coming in, and he's going to bring this. Chapter 26 ends with this: It's this little stroll down to, well, it's hell. That's what it is. He says in verse 20, "I will make you go down with those who go down to the pit, to the people of old, and I will make you to dwell in the world below, among ruins from of old, with those who go down to the pit, so that you will not be inhabited."

He says, "I am going to send you as a nation down. You are going to hell and judgment." It is staggering. It's sobering. Then he gives Ezekiel this, it's called a lament. It's a funeral song, and a funeral song is sung at funerals. The problem is, Tyre is still living. I mean, it's kind of a scary thing. He says, "Let me give you a song for Tyre, because they're about to die." What's interesting, is Tyre – he describes Tyre as this incredible seacoast city, right on the sea. Think of Manhattan, New York; L.A., huge commerce, metropolitan city. Incredible influence not only on land but on the sea, which extended its influence across the Mediterranean. Famous city. He just talks about -- that's why there's so much about the ocean here, when you see Tyre. It is a seacoast, literally built there on the seacoast. He says, "I'm going to destroy it."

He goes on, chapter 28, and now he comes to the accusation of the prince of Tyre. He has two accusations; the same one he says a couple times. He says this, right there in verse 2 of 28, "Because your heart is proud, and you said, 'I'm a god, I sit in the seat of gods, in the heart of the seas.'"

He goes on, he says, "Though you make your heart like the heart of a god," and he then -- jump down to verse 6 -- "because you make your heart like the heart of a god." So this guy thinks he's God. Like, he's got this god complex. Like, he thinks he's all of that. He lets everybody – he makes everybody think that he is, he is god.

And the Lord, as you look through this, is – I think that's one of the reasons why it gets so much attention, because he is so angry at this nation that has been doing this. He gives this judgment, he says, "Therefore," in verse 7, "I will bring foreigners upon you, the most ruthless of nations, and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom, and defile your splendor.

"They shall thrust you down into the pit, and you shall die the death of the slain in the heart of the seas. Will you say, 'I am a god,' in the presence of those who kill you, though you are but a man, and no god, in the hands of those who slay you? You shall die the death of the uncircumcised by the hand of foreigners; for I have spoken, declares the Lord."

God, in biting sarcasm, is, "Well, let's see who is God now." He was so angry. He gives a funeral song for the king of Tyre, while the king of Tyre is still living. That's what you see as the rest of 28, is this funeral song. Then we have one nation right there at the end of 28. It's kind of snuck in there, this prophesy against Sidon, nation six. We don't know what they've done. We start to read the judgment, but we see what they did right there at the end of verse 24. Where he says this, "For the house of Israel there shall be no more brier to prick or a thorn to hurt them among all their neighbors who have treated them with contempt."

So it's this idea they've treated Israel with contempt and, therefore, they've treated God with contempt. God's name is in Israel; it's on Israel. His presence is a part of Israel. His presence left Israel when this judgment started in Ezekiel, but to treat Israel with contempt was to treat God with contempt. Judgment came. And the final nation is Egypt. Egypt, I mean, you think it's bad for Tyre, Egypt gets four chapters. Four chapters.

There are seven different prophecies against Egypt in these four chapters. It starts off with this, "I'm against you, Pharaoh, king of Egypt," in verse 3, "the great dragon" -- the great dragon, that's the crocodile, right -- "the great dragon that lies in the midst of his streams, that says, 'My Nile is my own; I made it for myself.'" The nations that raged, the nations that set themselves up against God, to claim to be God, his accusation is this, like, "You set yourself up. There is no god. You didn't get here by yourself."

I mean, that's the accusation here. You just see judgment that comes down as God starts to unfold this. What's interesting, as you fast forward here a few verses and we get into verse 6, I think it is, and it says this, "Because you have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel, so when they grasped you with the hand, you broke and tore all their shoulders. When they leaned on you, you broke and made their loins shake."

What happened is, Israel and Egypt made this pact, truce, "Hey, let's stand together against Babylon."

As soon as Babylon came, Israel started to lean on Egypt for support, and Egypt was like a reed for a staff. They just -- right, what does a reed do? You're not getting support from a reed. You fall over. Egypt completely bailed on them. God was ticked off. They promised to help Israel, and they totally reneged on it. He was so angry about that. So you see this judgment. He says, "Because you said the Nile is mine, and I made it," I mean, it's a claim to be God.

He says, "Therefore, I'm against you." You see this judgment that comes out against them. He writes a lament for Egypt. And you see that song, and it is almost a replay of chapter 28 -- or 29, rather. And then chapter -- or the fourth one in chapter 30 is the fourth prophecy, is this prophecy that Egypt shall fall to Babylon.

He said, "Son of man, I've broken the arm of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Behold, that's not been bound up, to heal it by binding it with a bandage, so it can be strong to wield it. Therefore, says the Lord God, Behold, I'm against Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and will break his arms."

He goes on to say in 24, "I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put my sword in his hand, and I will break the arms of Pharaoh." Babylon is coming. What's interesting is you see this, and then 31 comes, and you're like, I don't understand this. I don't understand this. 31 is this metaphor where Egypt is a tree, and it's God who makes the tree grow. Egypt is this nation that's flourishing, that God is blessing. This is important to understand.

Often, what happens, people think God hates nations and God hates all leaders except Israel. That's not true. Because he's the one that actually blesses Egypt. He blesses Egypt. He leaves it to Egypt, "Will you worship me as the King of Kings, as the Lord? I'm doing this for you."

He sets it out there. It is plain as day who is blessing them. They refuse to worship him. They refuse. They choose not to call him Lord, even though he is blessing them. And he's not against them. They choose to reject him.

So what we see is more judgment for that in 32. Babylon comes again. Verse 11 of 32, "The sword of the king of Babylon shall come to you." Babylon is all over this place. Then, finally, we end chapter 32 with a tour of the underworld, a tour of hell. It is a who's who among the nations that rage against God. Assyria is in there, verse 22. Elam is in there. Egypt is in there, 20. A couple other nations, Edom is down there. The princes of -- the Sidonians are in there. That's where his judgment against these nations ends.

So what do we do with -- so this is a lot of information, and I hope I didn't lose

you all in this, trying to cover this all. What do we do with this? Especially in this day and age, when we see nations raging all around us, leaders raging against God, raging against him, and just working out incredible evil, what do we do? I think the first thing to understand as we look at this is God sees it. He sees it all the way down to those who would laugh, to the incredible evil that's so obvious to anyone of genocide, murder. He sees it all.

So when you think that God doesn't see it, and when you see things on the news, or you hear things on the news, or you experience things where you're seeing the rage that people have against God and what they'll do in the name of that, you have to understand, he sees it.

There's a lie that Satan would have you believe, that you start to go, "God doesn't see it. He's not doing anything. He doesn't see it." It's a lie. This stuff spreads on through years, decades. It could be centuries. God sees it. He left Israel unpunished for, what, 150 years. He was trying to call them back because that's his heart's desire. He's not wanting to judge. He's wanting to save. He's wanting to forgive and redeem. But he sees it. I think that's important. The other thing about this is that you need to understand something, God mocks it.

I don't know if you've ever thought about that. God mocks it. He makes fun of this. Like, you see what he says to the king of Tyre, "What are you? You say you're god? Okay. Now these people come and beat you. What are you going to say to them, 'I'm still god'?" He has biting sarcasm. He mocks it, "You little nations that are so raging, you little rulers so full of your little power, oh, whatever."

He mocks it. He's not intimidated. It is not a question of whether they have power or not. He has all power. He just does. I think it's important to understand that. So when we see the rage, we just have to have that framework, that God is sitting there on the throne, looking down, going, "That is about the stupidest thing I think I have ever seen. They have no power, none whatsoever." The other piece that you need to understand is that God, as he does this movement in these chapters here, and as we see him move in life, he has a plan. What you see in this is God will even use nations. Nations think they're doing things, but they're not. Assyria thought they were coming to conquer the northern kingdom. God actually said, "No, Assyria, I need you to come in here. I'll allow you to do this to bring judgment."

Assyria didn't do anything. Babylon thinks they're conquering all these nations, that it's all on them, they're so powerful, and Nebuchadnezzar is amazing. They're doing it because He is allowing it, and He is wanting this. He is bringing judgment on these other nations.

So the idea that nations plot, nations don't plot. Leaders don't plot. God plots. He allows things to happen. He structures things to happen to bring about his will. Then he judges them, even if they choose wickedness, because they're still choosing not to yield to him.

God is the one who is sovereign here. When you see these things happen, you have to understand that God is sovereign. There is a plan that is rolling along that is

much greater, much grander, and is far older than us. It's an eternal plan. There's something that is very, I would say -- as we bump up against that rage, there's this idea and reality that God has had this plan all along. It brings comfort, and it brings a sense of stability.

God, he sees it, he mocks it, he is sovereign, and he will judge it. There's a lie out there that says people are just getting away with it. And I think, often, if you are younger in your faith -- and you're going to hit this question at some point in time, you are.

Those of you in junior high, high school, you're going to hit this someday, where you're going to brush up against some really dark evil from nations and leaders. You're just going to be astounded. You're not going to know what to do. You won't have the words for it, and you'll ask the question, "God, where is your justice?" You're going to ask it. It's coming, if you haven't asked it already. I'm telling you, God will bring justice. He will. Judgment is coming. It's not something that we celebrate. It's something we rest in though.

We don't have to seek vengeance. There's this moment in that "Free Burma" fighters, where the guy, who is the main guy of this documentary, when he sees his family blown up by ISIS, he ends up just saying, "I hate them. I hate them. I want to kill them. I'm going to kill them all. I'm going to kill ISIS. It's the only way you can stop it." And in that moment, I'm feeling it, too, like, "Yeah, you know, let's go. Let's go kill 'em," right?

You just see it's so evil. It's so evil. Our hearts cry out to justice. The next few hours, he processes this, then comes the next morning. I think it was even that morning, that day or the next morning, he apologizes to the guy who is with him and says, "I'm sorry. It is not up to me to get vengeance. That's up to Jesus."

He will get justice. And there's something in this that I think, as you read each one of these passages -- let me tell you the phrase that happens over and over and over again, as we conclude. In the prophecy to Ammon, God says, "I'm going to do this, then you will know I am the Lord." In the prophesy against Moab, he says, "Then you will know I am the Lord."

In the prophesy against Edom, "They shall know my vengeance, declares the Lord God." In the prophesy against Philistia, he says, "Then they will know that I am the Lord." In the prophecy of Tyre, he says, "Then they will know I am the Lord." He says it again for Tyre. Oh, no, he says -- sorry, I didn't have that right.

Later on, here it comes to Sidon, "They shall know I am the Lord. They shall know I am the Lord. They will know I'm the Lord." He says to Egypt, "You will know I am the Lord God."

He says it once, twice, three times. I mean, it just keeps happening. All these nations that deny him, all these people that deny him, one day, they will stand before him. They will know that he is the Lord. They will. We don't have to get vengeance. We don't have to get revenge. We don't have to somehow try to be god, when we see these things happen.

We can rest in the fact that he is Lord. He sees it. He'll move toward it. He has a plan. We'll be safe in that plan. We will. But judgment is coming. It's a sobering thought, judgment is coming.

As we go forward, I think our call is to continue where he left us, to love those who persecute us, to love this world he came to redeem. He came to redeem every one of these nations that rages even here today. It's so kind of, like, what? But that's exactly it.

We can drop vengeance. We can drop rage. We can just move in Christ's love. If he calls us to run towards justice, which he does, we do that. We can help be part of this plan, where God says, "They will know I am the Lord."

Let me just pray. Lord, I just pray for our church and our people. God, when we see wickedness, evil, injustice, and it breaks our hearts, and it makes these questions rise up, it's questions of when are you going to stop this, all these things that surrounds us, Lord, would you remind us, would you just remind us that you do see it, that you do have a plan, that judgment is coming? Would you allow us just to rest in that? Not to celebrate judgment, Lord, but to move towards those people with love, so that they could be redeemed, just like you redeemed us. Amen. God bless you all.