

WANTED: A MAN  
(God Seeking For a Man)

This passage is one in a series of messages that Ezekiel preached to the religious leaders of Israel. You might notice some similarities between Israel then and America today.

Ezekiel 22:23-31 says, "And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation. There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. Her princes in the

midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord God, when the Lord hath not spoken. The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God.”

Let me draw your attention to 5 words in verse 30, “I sought for a man”. That is God speaking, not man speaking about God. If our theology has gotten us beyond the understanding of that, we have gone too far with our theology and logic. The Bible says that God said, “I sought for a man”. You

may as well believe it because God said it. “. . . But I found none.” There is no shortage of males in the species, but He could not find a man. He wasn't looking for a boy, a mouse, or a wimp. God was looking for a man.

God said, “I sought for a man among them . . . .” He looked at the prophets in verse 25, but they had a conspiracy and they were taking all they could from people. They were devouring the souls and had gone for the treasure and the precious things. They had worked and brought people down into poverty of widowhood. Verse 28 tells us they had not done the job right. There were vanity and lies among them. They claimed the Lord had spoken when the Lord had not spoken. God said that He had looked at the prophets and He couldn't find a man among them for what He wanted. There were many prophets but not a real man to serve Him.

Verse 26 says He looked at the priests and they wouldn't live by God's law, having violated it. Things that God had made holy, they had made common. They had profaned

them and treated them just like ordinary things. They made everything the same. They didn't sort out the difference between the clean and the unclean. And when it came to the special day of worship, they hid their eyes from that and made it like any other day of the week. God said He had looked through all those priests He had trusted to do His job and He couldn't find a man among them either.

Verse 27 indicates He looked among the princes. They were the government. He had entrusted them as His ministers to carry on certain things. However, they didn't want the responsibilities of rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked. Instead they were in it for what they could get. They destroyed souls to line their own pockets.

Verse 29 says that He looked out among the masses of the people and it was no better. He looked at each group of people, seeking for a man among ALL of them, and He found NONE.

What sad words these are! There was a hole in the hedge. He needed someone to

stand in the gap. There was no man to stand there or to plug the hole in the hedge, and the judgment of God was about to fall. That is what the Bible says. Don't use logic to try to get around it. He said He didn't want to judge, but judgment was going to have to fall.

As you study history, especially Bible history, whether God found a man or not affected how things turned out. I will give you Scripture. Then I will give you Bible illustrations and draw some conclusions to drive this point home.

Psalm 106:23 says, "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." God was going to destroy the Jewish people. One day God sought for a man and He had found one, Moses, and He could hold the judgment back. But in Ezekiel's day He sought for a man and He found none. There was a contrast between what God did one time and what He did another. It all boiled down to whether He found the man

He was looking for or not. That made all the difference, didn't it?

Another day we see wickedness upon the earth, and God determining to visit in awful judgment. He is going to destroy man and the earth with a flood. Genesis 6:5-8 says, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." There was a man to stand in the gap. The human race was not obliterated nor the rest of animal creation, for God had found His man. Noah found grace and by faith he stood, according to Hebrews 11.

We see another example in I Timothy 3:2-5, "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good

behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)” God looks at this church and that church, looking for a man to stand in the gap – no wimp, no mouse, not just any male who is willing to volunteer. There may be prophets and priests and people, but He knows what He is looking for. He is looking for a man to stand in the gap.

There aren't nearly as many churches as we would like to think. But within a few decades if there aren't some more men, there will be fewer churches, because there will be no one to stand in the gap or fill the hole in the hedge.

If we look on to verse 12 it says, “Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.” You can read the rest of the description of the deacons in the following verses. God

looks around for deacons to fill come holes in the hedge and stand in the gap in the church. People may elect a few wimps, but God is looking for real men that meet His qualifications.

Titus 1:5-11a tells us, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped . . . ." God tells Titus to look for some men that meet His qualifications so He

could put such men in the gap in those churches in those cities.

When Joseph was in Egypt and his father and brothers came down to live there, Joseph told them that when they were asked about their occupation, they were to tell Pharaoh that they were shepherds. Pharaoh's dynasty had overcome the shepherd kings and despised shepherds for being shepherds. However, they had to have flocks in order to have meat to eat. When they came, Pharaoh asked Joseph if there were any men of activity among them. (Genesis 47:6) He said if there were, then maybe they could take care of their flocks and his flocks also. Are there any men of activity? God is looking for a man of activity who can take on the load, rather than try to have an easy life.

Think about Bible history. God created man and then woman, putting them in the garden. The Devil came and tempted the woman, she was deceived and fell into sin. Here was a chance for her husband to be a man and stand. But when God looked at Adam, he failed and knowingly followed

Eve into sin. The whole human race suffers to this day because of it, - not because of Eve, but because of Adam. In Adam we all fell. The first man wouldn't stand.

God promised Abraham that he would have a son. He was getting older and so was Sarah. Sarah offered him her servant girl from Egypt named Hagar. Will Abraham stand and be a man? Or will he cave to his wife's plot? You know the answer. There was an Ishmael and the Jewish-Arab problems began which we still have to this day. Abraham wouldn't be the man he was supposed to be and he also failed.

Judah had a chance to stand. He was walking along the roadside one day and saw a woman dressed like a harlot. He didn't know she was his daughter-in-law. For ten generations the tribes suffered because of what occurred with Tamar that day. Ten generations were limited in their service to God because Judah would not be the man he should have been.

The Israelites came out of Egypt on the Sinai peninsula. God had Moses on the mountain, but He needed a man to stand

down in the camp. Would Aaron stand? No, he made a golden calf and catered to the whims of the people.

God sought for a man in the garden. He sought for a man in Abraham. God sought for a man in Judah. God sought for a man at Mount Sinai and he found none. It is a sad picture when you look at the judgments that came as a result of God not finding His man.

In the book of Judges you can read the story of apostasy. Occasionally you will find a man that would stand, but mostly it was "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judges 1:25b) And God found no man.

When the Israelites went into the land of Canaan, God told them to keep their hands off certain things in Jericho. But Achan would not be a man, and he brought judgment on the entire nation.

Eli was the high priest and he would not be a man before his sons when they were grown. He wouldn't speak to them when they got out of line so judgment followed.

Saul was told to deal with the Amalekites, but he spared Agag and the

finest of the spoils of war. It cost him his throne because he wouldn't be a man when God was looking for one. Saul was big and he could act tough, but he would not be the man God was looking for.

Rehoboam took the throne after Solomon died and the people presented the problem of taxes being too high. Would he be a man and cut taxes, -- cut the budget? No, he said he would just raise taxes and keep living like he had been. He wasn't the man to oversee 12 tribes. He failed.

There was one who I am not sure ever was a man. That was Ahab. If he had ever had any hopes of being a man, his hopes were through when he married Jezebel. He had married the wrong woman.

Jonah was called to go to Nineveh. But he wouldn't be a man, so he ran. He wanted to go anywhere but where he was told.

Herod couldn't stand up to his wife or his step-daughter. He would rather cut off the head of his favorite preacher, John the Baptist, than be a man in his own home.

Judas, for 30 pieces of silver, would cease to be what he could have been. He

had already started to slide by being a thief, but then he sealed his doom.

Peter promised he would be a man and stand, but a young maid asked him a question and he denied his own Lord. He wouldn't be the man he should have been.

Barnabas had to choose between doing right and pleasing his nephew, John Mark. He wouldn't be a man to do right, and he was never heard of thereafter.

Demas had traveled with Paul. Would he be a man? No, he loved this present world.

Do you understand what I am saying about God looking for a man? Over and over He looked for a man. Time after time there were none.

There was a pastor of the church in III John named Diotrephes. But he wouldn't be a man because he loved having the preeminence.

Annanias and Sapphira are another example. Annanias wouldn't stand up and be a man. He wanted to hang onto some money and look better than he really was.

Alexander the Coppersmith would withstand Paul rather than be the man he should have been.

The church leaders at Corinth would tolerate immorality rather than deal with it. They didn't want to be real men.

"I sought for a man. . . but I found none." As we go through the Bible what a sad, sad story this is! Again and again we see this happening. But there is the other side where God sought for a man and he found one.

We saw that in Psalms with Moses. He found His man who would stand in the breach and hold back the judgment.

He was going to wipe the planet clean, but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

He wanted to have fellowship and He sought for a man and found Enoch who walked with God and was not, because God took him. He found His man, didn't He?

He wanted to establish a race, a chosen people, his elect nation and He found an Abraham who would do that. Abraham failed at first with Ishmael, but later was recovered and had an Isaac.

God used Joseph to prepare a place in the land of Egypt where the family of Jacob could become the Israelite nation.

When the land of Canaan needed to be conquered, God looked for a man to lead an army against all the mighty giants. He found a man in Joshua.

When he wanted to redeem a Gentile bride, He found Boaz.

There was Samson. God could use him to defeat the mighty Philistines when they were a world influence.

When He wanted to organize a nation as a kingdom He found a little shepherd boy who would make a real man, David. He put the tribes together as a nation. When He wanted one who could sing and drive the demons out of a depressed king, He found His man in young David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel. When He wanted money raised to build the temple and the plans laid out, treaties set up for the workers and organizing leaders for worship, He found His man in David. David was a man after God's own heart.

God wanted to demonstrate great wisdom and there was a man who could do this and give up a chance at long life and great wealth, because he valued wisdom. His name was Solomon. When God gave him the choice, he proved God had found His man.

When He wanted someone to tell of the wonders of Messiah and to preach of the sufferings of the coming Savior, He looked for a man and found Isaiah.

When He wanted one who would weep over sin, He found that man in Jeremiah.

When he wanted to demonstrate how to be a faithful husband to an adulterous wife in the worst of situations in the home, he found His man in Hosea. God told him to marry Gomer to teach us that lesson.

When He wanted Nineveh warned, He would recover a man named Jonah. And He would send Nahum at another time.

When He wanted someone to stand up to world emperors, deal with scheming politicians and face raging lions, He found His man in Daniel.

When He wanted to rebuild the walls of His beloved city of Jerusalem, He found a cupbearer to be His man, Nehemiah.

When He wanted His people retaught on living Biblically He found Ezra, the teaching scribe.

When God wanted to reach a world, He had His Son train men and disciple them and send them out as apostles. What a job they did!

When He wants a home operated correctly, He looks for a man and makes him a husband, father and leader who will be faithful, consistent, spiritual, -- one who can produce saints in the home.

When God is looking for pastors and deacons, He looks in the church for men that He can use. When He looks for missionaries for the fields, He knows where to search.

Two of my daughters and one son are missionaries to Brazil. When the daughters were home from the field they went for their physical check-ups to a lady doctor who is a Muslim. She asked if it were required that they be single to be missionaries. When

they told her it wasn't, she asked if there were no men that go as missionaries. They assured her that there were some. She asked them if they were allowed to marry and they told her they were, but that most of the missionary men were already married. She further asked if there were no single men going, and they told her there weren't many. Why? How would you like to explain that to a Muslim whose single young men are willing and count it a privilege to die for Islam? About all the answer they could give her was that the men want to set up their careers and get established here in the States.

"I sought for a man . . . ." There are holes in the hedges. There are gaps all around. Judgment will come down. Where are the men? Where will they be for the churches? Where will they be in the future?

Jesus said, ". . . The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2) "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

(I Corinthians 4:2) God is seeking for men to be faithful, to labor, to meet the needs – men that are alive to God, ready for opportunity, consistent in labors, godly in life, powerful in prayer, ready to fill the gaps.

Rise up, O men of God!  
Have done with lesser things;  
Give heart and mind and soul  
and strength  
To serve the King of Kings.

Rise up, O men of God!  
The Church for you doth wait,  
Her strength unequal to her task;  
Rise up, and make her great!

Lift high the cross of Christ!  
Tread where His feet have trod;  
As brothers of the Son of man,  
Rise up, O men of God!  
--William P. Merrill