

Standing IN THE Gap

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INTRODUCTION – Israel had refused to listen to God and were in gross sin. They were then captured, the city destroyed and taken into Babylonian captivity by Nebuchadnezzar.

Ezekiel witnessed Nebuchadnezzar elevated to the Babylonian throne and a few years later the Egyptian and Babylonian forces met in a standoff battle, Jehoiakim (King of Israel) rebelled against his new overlord. Nebuchadnezzar soon responded by sending an army against Jerusalem, subduing it in 597 BC. Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin and about 10,000 Jews (2 Kings 24:14), including Ezekiel, were exiled to Babylon, where they joined those who had been exiled. Nebuchadnezzar placed Jehoiachin's uncle, Zedekiah, on the throne in Jerusalem, but within five or six years he too rebelled. The Babylonians laid siege to Jerusalem in 588, and in 586, the walls of Jerusalem were breached and the city plundered, the city and temple were burned.

1. **KEY VERSE** -- **Ezekiel 22:30** *I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the sake of the land, that I would not destroy it, but I found no one, not even one.*
 - A. Of course Jesus Christ was the ultimate fulfillment of this verse when He sacrificed Himself in our place and for our sin on the cross. (Galatians 3:13) However, we are also called to stand in the gap, interceding for those whom God places on our hearts.

Here are a few thoughts...

2. OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

- A. **Genesis 18:16-33** — **ABRAHAM INTERCEDING** (standing in the gap) for his nephew and family living in Sodom. Although Lot had taken advantage of Abraham, he was relentless for their deliverance!
 - **18:22-25** *Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord. 23 And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? 24 Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it? 25 Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked;*

far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"...

- **18:32-33** *Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten." 33 So the Lord went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.*

B. **Exodus 32:7-14** — **MOSES INTERCEDING** for Israel when Israel made the golden calf. He actually turned God's Heart! Notice the Christ-like heart in verse 32!

- **32:30-32** *Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. So now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin." 31 Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, "Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! 32 **Yet now, if You will forgive their sin — but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.**"*

- Some believe that the dash is a blank with unintelligible writing or, a vision of Christ taking upon Himself the sins of the world and experiencing absolute separation from the Father. (Matthew 27:45-46 *...And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"*)
- The Apostle Paul echoed the same intercessory cry for his Jewish "countrymen" in Romans 9:1-5.

3. **THE HEARTBEAT** of standing in the gap is "**Identificational Intercession,**" something seen in Nehemiah 1:5-8, as he prayed, "**Both my father's house and I have sinned...** Although he had not been directly involved in Israel's idolatrous sins, he identified with Israel and stood in the gap!

4. **THE RESULT/BLESSING** of standing in the gap is clearly seen in Job 42:10 *And the Lord restored Job's losses **when he prayed for his friends.** Indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.* (Restored meant that God turned Job's captivity and gave him back twice what had been stolen from him!)

Heavenly Father, let it not be said of us that You found no one to stand in the gap! Place within us the Heart of God to love those who are apart from You, even if they have mistreated us. Teach us to intercede for our family, our friends, our nation, and our world. We ask this in Your Name. Amen!