

Elder Vernon Johnson

Numbers

Four

Four (Part XI) Four Sore Judgments

Ezek. 14:21 "For thus saith the Lord GOD; How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast?" Listed in this verse is God's four sore judgments: sword, famine, noisome beast, and pestilence. Perhaps the most prevalent theme in the entire bible is the judgment of God. God is the judge of all the earth. In addition, several times we read that God is just. In meeting out judgment upon nations, upon groups of people, and upon individuals we see God using these four sore judgments.

God used the sword of the nation of Assyria to destroy and scatter the 10 tribes of Israel as well as to destroy several other nations. Likewise, God used the sword of Babylon to destroy and bring into captivity the nation of Judah as well as many other nations. Likewise, God put away evil from among the children of Israel by use of the sword in Ex. 32:27 "And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. 28 And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men." Today, we are sometimes slain from our evil ways by the sword of truth: Rev. 1:16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."

God has used famine to judge his people at various times:

1. 2 Sam. 24:13 "So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me."
2. 1 Kings 18:2 "And Elijah went to show himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria."
3. 2 Kings 6:25 "And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver."

4. 2 Kings 8:1 "Then spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the LORD hath called for a famine; and it shall also come upon the land seven years."

5. 2 Kings 25:3 "And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land. 4 And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees were against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain."

6. Lk. 15:13 "And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. 14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want."

7. Amos 8:11 "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:"

God sometimes uses the noisome beast to judge his disobedient people:

1. Ex. 8:16 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt. 17 And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt."

2. 1 Kings 13:23 "And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back. 24 And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase. 25 And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase: and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt. 26 And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD: therefore the LORD hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake unto him."

3. 1 Kings 20:36 "Then said he unto him, Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the LORD, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee. And as soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him, and slew him."

4. 2 Kings 2:23 "And he went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head. 24 And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she

bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them."

5. 1 Pet. 5:8 "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:"

Finally, God uses plagues to judge his people:

1. Num. 11:33 "And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD smote the people with a very great plague."

2. Num. 16:46 "And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun. 47 And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. 48 And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed. 49 Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah."

3. 2 Sam. 24:21 "And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people."

4. 1 Kings 8:38 "What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house:"

Thus, God showed forth his four sore judgments upon the children of Israel and of individuals who had sinned against him. Likewise, we are judged spiritually by the Lord through the sword of truth, the famine of hearing the word of God, the noisome beast of secular government and false religious systems, and the plague of our own heart. Thus, the Holy Spirit works in us to bring us to repentance and to be obedient to the word of God.