

Review

In our last study, we saw that God presented a parable which likened Israel and Judah's alliances with the other nations to two sisters who engaged in harlotry with many men. Through Ezekiel, God told them for the final time that they were about to bear the penalty of their sin. Now, as we pick up in chapter 24, we see that the day has arrived...

24:1-2 This Very Day

Ezekiel was in captivity in Babylon, with no earthly way possible to know what was happening in Jerusalem, which was over 500 miles away. But God told him, "Today is the day. Nebuchadnezzar's army had put Jerusalem to siege."

What day was it? Ezekiel says it is the ninth year, tenth month, tenth day. It is the ninth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, which Jeremiah wrote as well:

Jer. 52:4 Now it came about in the ninth year of his reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, camped against it and built a siege wall all around it.

That date of that year would come out on our calendars to January 1, 588BC.

24:3-5 The Boiling Pot

Like so many times before, God tells Ezekiel to act something out in front of the exiled Jews. It will be another visual demonstration of God's Word.

This time, Ezekiel is to take a pot, fill it with water, and put meat and bones in it. Then, he is to pile wood under the pot, and bring the water to a furious boil.

24:6-8 The Pot Is Jerusalem

As Ezekiel does this, he is to tell the Jews that the pot is the bloody city, and the fire is the siege which will boil it.

Remember that the "bloody city" is Jerusalem. She had been called

the "holy city," but her inhabitants were guilty of regularly shedding the blood of innocents (see study of chapter 22).

Take Out Piece After Piece

The meat in the pot represents the Jews who remain in Jerusalem. If you recall, there had been two previous attacks by Babylon on Jerusalem. But they had been selective.

The first time (2Ki. 24:1-7), only King Jehoiakim was taken. During the second assault (2Ki. 24:10-14), Nebuchadnezzar...

2Kings 24:14 ...led away into exile all Jerusalem and all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land.

However, this third and final time (2Ki. 25:1-11), all the meat in the pot was going to be taken out - piece after piece, without making a choice. Everyone would die or be removed.

Blood On The Bare Rock

The bloodshed which Jerusalem had committed was so prominent and careless that God describes Jerusalem as having placed the blood on the bare rock, not pouring it on the ground to cover it with dust.

That seems like a very strange description, doesn't it? The explanation is stranger still. You see, God has revealed to us that the life of the flesh is its blood (Gen. 9:4; Deut. 12:23; etc.). This is why blood sacrifices were commanded by God - it is actually the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement (Lev. 17:11).

I firmly believe that this is all more than just a figure of speech. Remember that when Cain killed his brother Abel, God said,

Gen. 4:10 ...“What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to Me from the ground.

Spilled blood not properly buried somehow cries out to God. That's why the Law commanded,

Lev. 17:13 “So when any man from the sons of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, in hunting catches a

beast or a bird which may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth.

Even Job understood this. When Job's affliction was worsened by those who accused him of wrongdoing, he said it was like they were assaulting him. And he cried out,

Job 16:18 "O earth, do not cover my blood, and let there be no resting place for my cry."

Blood which remains uncovered testifies to God of sin. That's why God said of Jerusalem that...

Ezek. 24:7 "...her blood is in her midst; She placed it on the bare rock; She did not pour it on the ground to cover it with dust."

24:9-14 Jerusalem Cleansed Of Filthiness

God said that the pot had filthiness and rust which could not be cleansed. It could only be removed by intense heat that would make the bronze glow. God was going to use the siege as judgment, like the refiners' fire.

24:15-17 Do Not Mourn Your Wife

Now, another living parable will be acted out by Ezekiel. There have been painful ones in the past, such as having to lie down on his side for months at a time. But this one will certainly be the most taxing and emotionally painful of all. Ezekiel's beloved wife is about to die suddenly. And as if that's not enough, God tells him that he is not allowed to grieve outwardly.

Understand that God does not tell him to have no sadness. Certainly, that would be a command that would be impossible to obey. Ezekiel's wife was "the desire of his eyes." He loved her dearly.

The command God gives is that there are to be no outwards signs of his grief. There is to be no wailing, lamenting, or tears. Of course his heart would be grieved, but he was only to groan silently.

When grieving, the Jews would uncover their heads (Lev. 10:6; 21:10) to put dust on them (Josh. 7:6; 1Sam. 4:12). Instead, Ezekiel is to

bind on his turban.

The Jews would also often demonstrate mourning by walking bare-foot (2Sam. 15:30; Mic. 1:8). Ezekiel is told, "Put your shoes on your feet."

At a time when deep mourning would be shown by covering the mouth (2Sam. 19:4; Mic. 3:7), he was told, "Do not cover your mustache."

And when people brought him "mourners' bread" (Jer. 16:7; Hos. 9:4), he was to reject it.

24:18-19 Ezekiel's Obedience

Ezekiel told the Jews that morning what God had told him. And that evening, his wife died suddenly. In obedience, he did everything that God had commanded him to do. He showed no visible signs of mourning.

This certainly would have been scandalous to the Jews who witnessed this. The people confronted him, demanding to know what this all meant.

24:20-26 The Message Given To The People

When the people demanded to know what was going on, Ezekiel told them what this visual parable meant. God was saying that what Ezekiel had just done is what would happen to the Jews in Jerusalem. What they love would die - specifically, the temple in which they took such pride.

But their lack of mourning won't be because of self-discipline in obedience to God's command. It will be because they don't have the opportunity. They will be immediately killed or captured.

24:27 You Will Be Mute No Longer

Remember that God had made Ezekiel unable to speak unless God was directing him to prophesy. He had said to the prophet back in chapter three,

Ezek. 3:26 "Moreover, I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you will be mute and cannot be a

man who rebukes them, for they are a rebellious house.

But after the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, the Jews in exile would receive confirmation of Ezekiel's prophecies when an escapee came to them and reported everything that took place (vs. 26). When they received this information, Ezekiel would once again be able to speak freely. His ministry as a prophet would finally be accepted, and God would then be able to offer encouragement to the Jews about the glorious future God had in store for them.