

Ezekiel 12

How To Answer Mockers

J.D. Farag

KAPONO: Lord, You hear us when we call, Lord, and we're calling on You this evening. Would You watch and protect this time together that we have? Lord, as we sit under Your teaching, would You speak to our hearts, Lord, clear our minds, and even our bodies?

If they're anxious or whatever it may be, Lord, would You just to give us peace, that we may be able to hear You speak this evening? So thank You for Your teaching. Thank You for the word, Lord. We ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen and amen. Good evening to you. You can be seated. Welcome. So glad you're here tonight. I want to welcome those of you that are joining us online. We're starting a little bit early for a reason.

We're really looking forward to hearing from Wally and Maura, who I asked to come and share with you about the Nepal missions. Very exciting. So come on up, you guys. [Applause] Yeah, Let me get this thing situated here. This thing is all bust up like me. [Laughter] Okay, whatever. All right, it's all yours. Take it away.

WALLY: Aloha. [Audience: "Aloha"] We are Wally and Maura Tanaka, and we do short-term missions to Nepal. This past November, we were so blessed to be prayed over and sent out from Calvary Chapel Kaneohe, which we are proud to call our home church. Many of you faithfully prayed for our team the whole time that we were on that mission and more recently in January. So today, Mora will tell you a little of what this Nepal medical mission is about.

MAURA: Where is Nepal? Nepal is a beautiful country nestled along the southern slopes of the Himalayan mountain range, home of Mt. Everest. Nepal is a developing country. The average monthly income being less than \$200. It was once a Hindu kingdom, but as of 2008, it was declared a secular nation and Christianity was allowed to grow and to flourish.

Today, Nepal's Christianity is among the fastest growing in the world. Because of this, the Hindu leaders in government have enacted the anti conversion law, which makes it illegal to convert people punishable by five years in prison, and for foreigners like us, deportation after serving the five years in prison.

I have been going to Nepal on medical missions since 2002 and Wally since 2006. My intention in 2002 was to step out in faith just this one time. My intention about each trip, return trip, was meant to be my last. At least that is what I told God. I have since been to Nepal a total of 23 times.

[Applause]

I know that mission trips of 2 to 3 weeks don't seem like it's worth the bother. You may be thinking, what good can possibly come out of such a short mission? There is going to be – I mean, what good is there going to be for such a short time? Over the years, I have come to realize the immense value of short-term missions.

Going on a mission like this requires placing your whole trust in God, knowing that all the planning is subject to change at any time. We partner with a Christian church under the leadership of Pastor Reuben Rana Magar, who has become like family to us. We basically put ourselves at their disposal, having them choose the locations of the medical camps often traveling by Jeep on rough mountain roads to remote villages.

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We trust our hosts implicitly, knowing that they wouldn't put us in any danger. The mission team provides basic medical care in these free medical camps, drawing in the masses, both believers and nonbelievers. We can see about over a 3 to 4 day period in two villages.

We treat them with the love of Christ, many of whom have never heard of Jesus. This then opens the door for our Nepali partners to follow up with them. We are told that every time we go the Body of Christ grows. The medical care we provide is very basic. No major surgeries, just lots of wound care and treatment of acute symptoms, such as pain in areas like head, stomach, arms, legs, back.

We also offer dental care, relieving people of pain through extractions. Non-medical people who are willing to do whatever it takes are valued team members as well. We take with us donations of toothbrush, toothpaste, bandages, reading glasses, crocheted beanies and warm clothing. Everyone who comes leaves with a goody bag.

We have financed well projects. Each well supplies clean water to five households. And goat projects, giving one male and one female goat to families which then produce baby goats and milk for cheese that can be sold. So these missions may be short, but so very effective. Through the relationships we have built, we were able to respond to the devastating earthquake in 2015, getting them help and money right into their hands, as opposed to sending it through nonprofit organizations, much of which never trickled down to those that really needed it, especially to the Christians.

Over all these years, God has been faithful in providing the finances, as well as His favor and His timing. I cannot even recount here all the times that we know that God Himself stepped in and changed the course of events for the good of His children and for His glory. In a country where life is hard, poverty and hopelessness abound and persecution is real, we have witnessed salvations, healing miracles, spiritual deliverances and God incidences only He could have orchestrated.

For example, before having a medical camp in the village of Khotang, there were no Christians, just voodoo, witch doctors and black magic. Now there's a thriving church. I was introduced to a new believer there. She had accepted Jesus just two weeks prior. She asked us to go to her house to pray, see, because since she had become a believer, her pots and pans would fly across the room and the window shutters would open and close.

So here's an example of God's timing. Upon entering our clinic – opening our clinic one year, a man was rushed in, bleeding profusely from a head wound. The “Yack Man” as we call him, had gotten between two yaks fighting. He had been gored in the forehead between his eyes by a filthy yak's horn. We were able to thoroughly clean his wound, which was deep and stitch him up. Had this injury occurred a week before or after, we would not have been there and he could have died from a horrible infection.

Also that day, we were delayed from returning from the clinic to the hostel. We were later to learn that this was another example of God's timing. Up ahead of us there was a bad accident where a young woman from Holland was thrown from a tall truck. Her injuries were extremely painful with broken ribs, wrist, lacerated ear and head wounds.

Now think about it. In this very, very remote road near the Tibetan border in the middle of nowhere, only God could happen to have a medical team all the way from Hawaii to be traveling on the same road behind this truck. Had we left on time as we were supposed to, the accident would have occurred without our knowledge.

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We were able to offer her medical treatment, enough to help her manage her pain and enable her to continue to a hospital in the city. And then once on another mission, we were in a remote village again, near the Tibetan border in the foothills of the Himalayas.

Although we had no doctor or nurse on the team, we were still considered a medical team. We did our best in treating minor ailments, runny noses, coughs, rashes, etc. We distributed vitamins, toothpaste, toothbrush. We cleaned teeth, faces and wounds.

One man came to us with a gaping, infected and very serious wound. We noted that the flesh on his arm was eaten away, clear to the bone. It looked like a case of flesh eating bacteria. We feared he would eventually require amputation.

Over a three day period we scrubbed the diseased flesh away, applied antibacterial ointment, sprayed colloidal silver, and more importantly, prayed over him. We left him medicine and clean bandages. Without clean water and sanitary conditions, the prognosis was grim. We left not knowing what would become of him.

Months later, upon returning to Nepal, I was asked, "Remember the man with the big wound on his arm?" I braced myself for some bad news. I was told, "He is completely healed and he has accepted the Lord, he and his whole family." [Applause]

I think God orchestrated the whole thing. I think He deliberately had us go on this medical mission without a doctor or nurse, without the possibility of depending on man for healing miracles. In this way, we would have to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that He is the healer. And although it is a wonderful blessing to have medical professionals on our mission teams, we will always remember who the healer is.

And just like in the Bible, we observed in the distance a procession of people coming to the medical camp. Friends were carrying someone on a stretcher. However, instead of coming through the roof, they brought him through the door. The man was jaundice and lethargic, appearing near death. We were told he was in kidney failure. All we could do was pray.

Right after praying, he sat upright and began talking in Nepali. Pastor Rubin translated, "He wants to accept Jesus." And that day Jesus said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven." There are so many more God incidences that the world would call coincidences. There are so many times where we know without a doubt that God granted us favor, opened shut doors, showed us His power and His glory, His protection and provision.

Nepal missions is not for everyone. We totally get that. Not many with limited vacation days choose to use those days in Nepal rather than going to other tourist destinations. The air travel is long.

The ride to the remote villages are up to 12 hours, mostly on extremely rough roads that have no guardrails or street lights, on the edge of a cliff through river crossings and then trekking up the rest of the way at an altitude we are not accustomed to. And rather than sleep on a luxurious hotel bed, we choose to sleep on the ground in a sleeping bag.

Seriously, look at us. God, can use anyone whose agenda is submitted to His. Could it be that the Lord is calling you?

We are in the process of putting a team together to go to Nepal, tentatively November 29th to December 15. Space is limited and flight reservations need to be made soon. If you are interested, or

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even if you would like to know more, we will be available after service in the lobby to answer any questions.

I can assure you that the medical missions have served to bless so many people. However, none are more blessed than we are. Try as we might, we cannot out-bless God. Sometimes I wonder if the mission is for those in the remote villages of Nepal or for our benefit. I have come to the conclusion that it is both. And that's my story and I'm sticking to it! [Laughter and applause]

PASTOR JD: I just told her to get her own material, you know. Totally plagiarized me on that one. Wow, right? Oh, you guys. So yeah – so if you just want more information, they'll be available after the Bible study. And please avail yourself of that.

We are very excited to see what God is going to do. And Lord willing, there will be a group, limited, as Maura shared, November and into December. So pray about it. See what the Lord – I can only say that the mission trips that I've been on have been life changing for me. Life changing, and that's not hyperbole. So thank you so much, you guys, for sharing with us. [Applause]

Miracles. Imagine that. Miracles, right?

All right. Well, we're going to continue on in our study through Ezekiel. And last week we ended up with Chapter 11. So tonight we'll pick it up in Chapter 12. And I'll ask you to turn there if you're not there already. This chapter is actually amongst the best in all of Scripture as it relates to those who ridicule us and mock us, those of us who dare to believe in God's prophetic word.

And what we're going to see is God using the Prophet Ezekiel as a prophetic sign vis-à-vis prophetic visuals illustrating and demonstrating the fulfillment of God's prophetic judgment. And sadly, though, at the end of the chapter, the people still refuse to repent.

And instead of repenting, we find them scoffing and mocking, despite these final prophetic warnings from a loving, long suffering God who is having Ezekiel do this. Why? Because He wants them to repent.

It's not God's will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. And He's so long suffering. Now their mocking comes in two familiar ways. The first of which is that, Oh, every generation thought it was in their lifetime. And yet the visions, the predictions, they failed to happen, thus it will never happen. That's the first one. We've heard it all before.

The second one is: Even if it does happen, it won't happen in our lifetime. So no worry, no hurry. We have plenty of time before it does, if it does. So this is going to be what we're going to see, and two ways that they're going to mock. And spoiler alert, nothing has changed. Nothing new under the sun. Oh, it's – maybe it's packaged a little bit differently, but it's the same mocking.

Now, what's really interesting is that Ezekiel is given two visual prophecies to which they mock in two specific ways which in turn is going to provide us with no less than two ways to answer these mockers. So are you ready? Let's do it.

“Lord! Will You make a complete end of the remnant of Israel?” Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [Verse 14] ‘Son of man, [Verse 15] your brethren, your relatives, your countrymen, and all the house of Israel in its entirety, are those about whom the

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inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, 'Get far away from the Lord; this land has been given to us as a possession.'"

Verse 1, "Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying: "Son of man, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, which has eyes to see but does not see, and ears to hear but does not hear, for they are a rebellious house. Therefore, son of man, [Verse 3] prepare your belongings for captivity, and go into captivity by day in their sight. You shall go from your place into captivity to another place in their sight. It may be [And here it is] that they will consider, though they are a rebellious house."

Okay, Let me give you kind of a quick back story so you kind of understand what's going down here. Now, Ezekiel is back in Babylon. He was transported in the realm of the supernatural to Jerusalem and to the temple from Chapters 8 - 11, and given these visions about what was going to happen there in Jerusalem, to Jerusalem, in the temple, to the temple, namely that of its coming destruction.

So now he's taken back at the end of Chapter 11, back to Babylon, where he is already captive in Babylon. But the problem is that in Babylon you've got a myriad of false prophets that are all saying the polar opposite of what Ezekiel is saying and what Jeremiah was saying in their prophesying. "Nah, it's not going to happen.

Don't get too comfortable here in Babylon. We're going to go home pretty soon. Don't listen to Jeremiah. Don't listen to Ezekiel. Don't listen to Daniel either, while you're at it. We're going to go back. We're not going to be here that long.

This was just kind of a fluke. Yeah, I know it happened two times, but it won't happen again." Wait, that's real logical. But no, it will happen, Jeremiah prophesies. It will happen, Ezekiel prophesies. And so now he's got to do this to get their attention because the whole purpose of these visual prophecies, like with Jeremiah, if you might remember, was that it would create curiosity more so than preaching and prophesying and proclaiming and warning and sounding of the trumpet.

There's no words. He's – what is Ezekiel doing now? He's acting like he's being taken captive. He's already captive, and he's doing it so we can see him doing it. What is going on? Oh, it's working. It's working. Verse 4, "**By day you shall bring out your belongings in their sight, as though going into captivity; and at evening you shall go in there sight, like those who go into captivity. [Now, verse 5] Dig through the wall in their sight, [Man, we're really doing this Lord, yeah?] and carry your belongings out through it.**"

Because this is exactly what they did when they were taken captive. They tried to escape and they had their belongings. We would maybe refer to them in our day as "go-bags," where you've got everything, the basic necessities in a bag, ready to go in case of an emergency. Well, that's kind of what they did in anticipation of something like this happening.

So here God tells Ezekiel I want you to put together this, you know, this bag, and then I want you to dig a hole in the wall, and I want you to, you know, act this out, dramatize this, illustrate this, that you're trying to escape through the hole with your go-bag of all your belongings in their sight. Make sure you do it both during the day and at night in their sight, because I want them to see you doing this. Okay.

Verse 6, "**In their sight [You get the impression that this is to be in their sight] you shall bear them on your shoulders and carry them out at twilight. You shall cover your face, so that you cannot see the**

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ground, for I have made you a sign to the house of Israel.” So [Verse 7. I love this] I did as I was commanded.”

Oh would to God that it would be said of us that we did as we were commanded. We did all that the Lord had commanded us to do. **“So I did as I was commanded. I brought out my belongings by day, as though going into captivity, and at evening I dug through the wall with my hand. I brought them out at twilight, and I bore them on my shoulder in their site. And in the morning the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Son of man, has not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said to you, ‘What are you doing?’”**

That's not really what they're asking. They know what he's doing. The question really is: Why are you doing this? Oh, I'm so glad you asked. *Verse 10.* Here's how you answer them. I love it when God gives us the answer to the question. **“Say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “This burden concerns the prince [Speaking of Zedekiah] in Jerusalem and all the house of Israel who are among them.”” Say, [Verse 11] ‘I am a sign to you. As I have done, so shall it be done to them; they shall be carried away into captivity.’ And the prince who is among them shall bear his belongings on his shoulder at twilight and go out. They shall dig through the wall to carry them out through it. He shall cover his face, so that he cannot see the ground with his eyes.**

[Pardon me. Verse 13] **I will also spread My net over him, and he shall be caught in My snare. I will bring him to Babylon, [Again, speaking of Zedekiah] to the land of the Chaldeans; yet he shall not see it, though he shall die there.”**

Do you remember this? I think it was Jeremiah 39. It was sort of a puzzle, I guess, of sorts, because how are you going to take him to Babylon where he's going to die, yet he's not going to see it. Oh, here's why: Zedekiah is going to be taken captive, though he tried to escape. And the Babylonians are going to kill his sons, then take out his eyes. So the last thing he saw was the brutal death of his sons.

And then they blinded him and then they carried him captive to Babylon, where he would die. That's how. So all this thing that Ezekiel is dramatizing and illustrating and demonstrating, it was a prophecy, a visual prophecy to get their attention so they would ask the question, “What are you doing? Why are you doing what you're doing?”

Oh, because this is what is going to happen to Jerusalem. Contrary to what these false prophets are telling you about those who remain in Jerusalem, they're going to be taken captive. This is what's going to happen to them. I'm trying to illustrate this for you, to convince you that this is what's going to happen, because they were believing and had been deceived to believe that the people still in Jerusalem were not going to be taken captive.

In fact, not only were they not going to be taken captive to Babylon, they were going to return to Jerusalem from Babylon. So you might say that this kind of ruined their day a little bit. So he's telling them that this is the reason for this visual demonstration.

“But [Verse 16. Here's the grace of God] I will spare a few of their men from the sword, from famine, and from pestilence, [Remember the three? That was another visual prophecy earlier] that they may declare all their abominations among the Gentiles wherever they go. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.”

So this first of two visual prophecies, and we'll commence with the second here in the next verse, but notice that God will always have a remnant. He's going to spare a few of them, and here's why and

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we're told why: "That they may declare all their abominations among the Gentiles wherever they go." This remnant that I'm going to spare from the sword, from famine and from the pestilence, they're going to declare all the abominations that were committed by God's people, and "then they shall know that I am the Lord."

One thought real quick and then we'll move on God foreknows who it is that He can have as a remnant that will be faithful to do that which He's sparing them to do. He foreknows. He knows us. He knows our hearts.

And this select few that He's going to spare, He knows – because He can't spare someone who He foreknows will not be faithful to do what He's spared them to do, because then He would be party to our disobedience. And that's impossible, that's inconsistent with the character of God.

I hope that made sense, because that's huge, right? See God knows the end from the beginning, and He will entrust us with that which He knows we'll be faithful to follow through and do and be faithful to the command that He commands us to. So these few, this remnant He knew there would be faithful to declare all of their abominations.

Verse 17. This is the second visual prophecy. **"Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'Son of man, eat your bread with quaking, and drink your water with trembling and anxiety. And say to the people of the land, [Verse 19] 'Thus says the Lord God to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the land of Israel: 'They [Again, speaking of those still in Jerusalem, not yet taken captive] shall eat their bread with anxiety, and drink their water with dread, so that her land may be emptied of all who are in it, because of the violence of all those who dwell in it.'"**

Can you use your God given imagination and think through this with me? How full of fear do you have to be to actually shake and tremble and be unable to drink out of a glass of water because your hand is shaking so much? That's fear. That's fear.

And so now Ezekiel is demonstrating this, dramatizing this, because this is what is going to happen to them. That's pretty strong. You've heard the expression, doubtless you said it yourself, as have I: "A picture is worth a thousand words." This is a powerful picture worth a thousand words.

Verse 20, **"Then the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall become desolate. And [Here it is again] you shall know that I am the Lord."**

Now, this is the second of two visual prophecies, and we're going to turn a very fascinating corner now where God through the Prophet Ezekiel both answers and silences the mockers. Because again, their response? Not repentance, ridicule, ridicule.

Here is Ezekiel has done all of this, all that God has commanded him to. I mean, the poor guy's got to patch up the hole that he dug out of his house to demonstrate this whole thing. And with the hope that they would, out of curiosity, ask Ezekiel, Why are you doing this? What is your point?

Oh, here's my point. What I'm doing is a prophecy of what is going to happen to those who remain in Jerusalem, many of them people we love and know, family, loved ones still in Jerusalem that you think you're going to be reunited with in Jerusalem.

No, they're going to be reunited with you here in Babylon. That's what this is about. That's the point of this. Now, you would think that they would fall to their face, humble themselves, cry out to God, "Oh, God, be merciful to us." No, it's the again, exact opposite, sadly.

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So it starts, verse 21, and in a most interesting way, again. **“And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Son of man, what is this proverb that you people have about the land of Israel, which says, ‘The days are prolonged, and every vision fails?’”**

Do you see the – this is again, one of those places – I don't need more. I already have plenty that prove that God has an amazing, perfect, because He's perfect, sense of humor. Do you see how He couched this whole thing?

Can I just – can you just give me this for just a moment? “Ezekiel, Come here, come here. Son of man, come here. What's up with this proverb, this saying, this mocking this ridiculing? You know, the one I'm talking about Ezekiel?” “No, God. Refresh my memory.” “I'll refresh your memory. It's the one that goes like this: ‘The days are prolonged, and every prediction, every date setter has failed.’

That's the one I'm talking about, Ezekiel.” If I'm Ezekiel, I'm like, “Oh, yeah, that one. Yeah, I know exactly what you're talking about. Yeah, that's a very popular proverb. That's a very popular saying around these parts.” “So yeah, what's up with that Ezekiel? You know, what is this proverb?”

So this is the first mocking, and God's going to have the final word on it by the way. See, because it's been repackaged in our day this way: Oh, how many people have thought the Lord was coming back and He didn't, and things just continue on as they always have. These failed visions.

The vision fails / predictions failed. Oh, I thought it was going to be 2000 – was it 2012? Well, that was – no, that was... Forget it. I don't want you to even think about it, actually, because I'll lose you for the rest of the Bible study. But all those date setters, “The Lord's coming back on May 22nd!”

Camping was his name. Remember that? Don't remember that. And then it failed. It didn't happen. It was a failed vision. A failed prediction. And so what does that do? Oh, it just gives them all this ammunition. Come on! He's not coming. I've heard this before. It's not going to happen. It's not going to be our lifetime.

Every generation thought it was going to be in their lifetime. And so here's the conclusion in their mocking: The prediction / vision failed to happen, Thus it will never happen.

Okay. **“Tell them therefore, [Uh-oh. Verse 23] ‘Thus says the Lord God: “I will lay this proverb to rest, [Oh, can I watch?] and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel.”’ But say to them, “The days are at hand, and the fulfillment of every vision. For no more [Verse 24] shall there be any false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel.”**

No need. You know why no need? Because God is going to answer the mocking of failed and false predictions. He's going to lay them to rest once and for all, put them to bed, silence them once and for all. How? By fulfilling them. That'll do it.

You can't say that anymore because it happened. You can't say, “Oh, it's not going to happen.” It happened! Yeah, basically you've just silenced me. That's what God's saying. I love it when God brags on Himself and boasts in Himself. It's kind of like this. And again, you'll forgive me for the silliness with which I illustrate this, but it's a sanctified silliness, okay? And that's my story, Maura, and I'm going to stick with it.

So here's how I see it and picture it in my mind's eye. It's like God's saying, “Ezekiel, you know that saying? I'm going to stop them from saying that. Do you want to know how?” “Yeah, God, how are

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you going to do that?" "I'm just going to do it. Because they're mocking Me about not doing it, so I know how to stop them from mocking Me about not doing it.

I'll just do it and they won't be able to mock Me about not doing it because I did it." Did I take that too far? I don't think so. If I did, it's a gift.

Verse 25, **"For I am the Lord. [I love this] I speak, and the word which I speak will come to pass; it will no more be postponed; for in your days, O rebellious house, I will say the word and perform it," says the Lord God."**

Translated: God said it. That settles it. Oh, what'd you say? Wait, I didn't hear you. Speak up. No, that's what I thought. That's what I thought.

Verse 26 **"Again the word of the Lord came..."** Am I having too much fun with this? (Chuckling) **"Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Son of man, Look, the house of Israel is saying, 'The vision that he sees is for many days from now, and he prophesies of times far off.' [Into the future] [We've got hundreds of years] Therefore say to them, [Uh-oh, again] 'Thus says the Lord God: 'None of My words will be postponed any more, [How about that? 'How about that' isn't in the original] but the word which I speak will be done,' says the Lord God.'"**

Oh, I like the chapters that end like that. (Chuckling) All right, here's the second one, right? And God is going to silence the mocking that says – this is another one of those sayings I hear them saying. "Ezekiel, come here. There's another one. "There is?" "Yeah. You know this one too." "I do?" "Yeah.

It's the one that says, 'Ah, no hurry, no worry. Oh, my master delays his coming. Party on!' Matthew 24, to me, perhaps amongst the most powerful parables in all of the pages of Holy Writ. You've got two servants contrasted the one with the other.

The Master says to these two servants, I'm going to leave, but I'm going to come back. And when I come back I want to find you faithful doing that which I've called you to do so when I come back, you're found faithful doing it. The righteous servant: All right, game on. He's faithful. Master comes back at a time they expect not. The faithful servant: Well done good and faithful servant.

The wicked servant: Not exactly. He's cast into outer darkness where there's gnashing of teeth. Why? Because when his master returned he was beating his fellow servants, he was drinking with drunkards, he was eating with gluttons, he was partying like there's no tomorrow.

I mean, he's got – there's no hurry. Why was he doing that? Because he said to himself, and this is why it is one of the most powerful and apropos parables, I believe, speaking to our day today, his problem was and his peril was that he said to himself, "No, he's going to delay his coming. He's not coming that soon. It's far down the road. No hurry, no worry."

And then his master comes when he did not expect his master to come and he's sealed his fate because of it. Now where am I going with this? Well, you probably already know where I'm going with this. How many today say this? Oh, it's the same thing said in a different way. No, no, we got years. You know, I have to – actually next week. Is it next week in Ezekiel 13? I think it is.

The lies that – the title of next week – I'm not going to teach next week's Bible study tonight, don't worry. But the title is going to be: Seductive Lies, Destructive Lives. I know that's a play on words. But these false prophets were telling the people lies, lying to them, telling them that, no, you've got nothing to worry about. You got plenty of time. No worry, no hurry.

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There's a very good comparison, I guess maybe analogy would be a good word to describe it, for lack of a better one, that one commentator drew this fictitious picture of an emergency meeting with Satan and his demons because they were losing ground for the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of God, and people were getting saved and they kind of needed to regroup and strategize and come up with a better way to damn more souls because they were losing souls, because souls were being won. That was terrible. But anyway, I think you understood it.

So they have this fictitious meeting. Picture the scene, right? So Satan calls an emergency meeting. "What are we going to do?" So one of the demons says, Well, I have an idea. Let's just tell them that there's no heaven. Satan's like, Yeah, no that – no. That might get a few, but that's not going to really be effective.

Then another demon pipes up and says, Okay, I know. Let's not tell them no heaven, let's tell them there's no hell. That kind of takes the edge off of it. Satan's like, Yeah, but no, that's not going to really do the job either.

And then finally another demon pipes up and says, No, I got it. It's not no heaven or no hell. Let's just tell them, no hurry. Satan says, That's it. Get out there. No hurry, no urgency.

When I was in business, we had a saying. Not like the Proverbs in Ezekiel's day. These were – anyway... It went like this: You need to put the "now" into it. Let me say that again. You need to put the "now" into it. Because see, absent the "now." And by the way this is why it is and I'm sorry to use this comparison, but you know those infomercials? They put the "now." Oh, my goodness do they put the "now." Wow.

And if you order now, we'll add in another one, no extra charge! Just pay shipping and handling fees and you know, the fine print. That's putting the "now" into it. Now, you'll forgive me for using that comparison, but I think that's the problem, isn't it? There's no "now." The "now" has been removed from – and then we're like the unrighteous servant in Matthew 24.

No, it's not now. It's not now. No, but it is now! You put the "now" back in, that changes everything. Because if it's now, wow, I better get serious. If it's not now, let's flip it over, by contrast. Okay, if it's not now, well, then what? When it is time, let me know. But if it's not now, what's the big deal? Why are you hassling me if it's not now. Do I have to address this now? No, You got time. Okay, cool.

No, but no, we need to know now. Now? Yeah, now. Well, the party's over then, now, because it's now. I did take that one too far. But I think you understand what I'm trying to communicate here, right? That was, their mocking was, No, it's not going to happen now. It's been postponed.

I, did spend a little of time on it. I'm thinking, couldn't the New King James translators come up with a better word than postponed? It sounds so secular, right? The meeting has been postponed. Don't you think that God's judgment, the return of the Lord, rises to the level of something stronger than, "Well, it's been postponed." Oh, okay. Well, when? Well, it's not now.

Okay, well, then I'll take it off my calendar, I guess, if it's not now. So postponed, I don't like the word. Did you get that from what I was just saying? Can I use a little bit of a stronger word? Can I use the word delayed? It's been delayed. My master delays his coming. So what's the hurry? What's the urgency? He delays his coming.

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And so the Lord's saying, actually it's not been postponed. No longer will it be postponed any more. In fact, it's not postponed, it's now, it's now. How is it now? Oh, you'll see, because I'm going to do it, not later, not a far off, not down the road, not in generations from now.

No, I'm going to do it now so it's not postponed anymore. It's been, if you don't mind, rescheduled. Oh, when was it rescheduled for? Now. Oh, but I thought it was... No, it's not postponed. It's been rescheduled for now. Should I stop now while I'm kind of ahead? Because I do want to get to what I want to get to, which is our day, where scoffers and mockers abound.

And it's a prophetic sign of the last days as the Apostle Peter prophesies in his second epistle, Chapter 3. We just finished our study through 1 and 2 Peter. I want to read verses 3-4. Tell me if it almost echoes what we just read in Ezekiel. Peter writes by the Holy Spirit. "First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' He promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."

It hasn't happened. It's not going to happen. And it's not going to happen now if it is going to happen. Everyone thought it was going to happen then. It didn't happen then; it's not going to happen now.

Everything just goes on as it always has. Have they been talking to Judah in Ezekiel's day? It sounds like they have. Well, this is where I wanted to go. I took you on the scenic route to get there, but we got there. Did you enjoy the scenic route?

Okay. Question: What's the answer to how we answer these scoffers and mockers? Proverbs 26:4-5. Verse 4, "Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like him. [Verse 5, watch this] Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes." Wait. What? Verse 4, "Do not answer a fool according to his folly." Verse 5, "Answer A fool according to his folly."

Well, wait, which one is it? Answer: Yes. Please explain. I will.

Now at first read these two verses seem to contradict each other. However, upon further examination, they actually complement each other. And here's how I get there. Verse 5, Listen, doesn't say not to answer a fool. It just says not to answer a fool in such a way that you become like them. In other words, if the fool is mocking, don't stoop down to their level and foolishly mock them, lest you become as foolish as them.

In other words, don't answer them like that. Don't answer them like them or you'll become like them, a fool. It doesn't mean do not answer them. Just don't answer them in that way. That's what verse four is saying. Now this jells into verse 5. And there are those times when the best thing to do or say is nothing at all. And here's why.

Because no matter what you do or say would require you to foolishly stoop to their level to do or say it. I've never regretted an email I didn't send And conversely, how many times have I regretted an email that I pushed send, only to wish that there was a button that I could push that said Unsend. I should not have sent that! Owie maui! This is bad.

The best thing sometimes to say is nothing at all. And in those times – and this is where discernment – we're going to talk about this in a moment. This is where discernment is of paramount importance because you have to discern the situation. Am I able to answer this fool?

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That's Proverbs. I didn't – I'm just quoting Scripture here, okay? But it sounds – it feels good to say it, doesn't it? You know, you have to ask yourself, okay, you fool. Okay. That's the last time. I got it out of my system, I think.

So I got to ask myself this question. Can I answer this fool without myself becoming a fool? If I can't, then you better not try. Don't say anything.

But now we got verse 5. Because if I don't say anything, the guy's going to think, See! Gotcha. Ha ha! Wise in his own eyes. Well, I can't have that. I've got to answer. I've got to say something. Okay, verse 5. Relax, by the way. Why are you getting so worked up? This is where discernment comes in.

This is where wisdom comes in. The wisdom in verse 5, which says, "Answer the fool." "Answer a mocking fool, lest they fancy themselves wise in their own eyes." Well, wait a minute. How am I going to do that? This is quite the dilemma.

I don't dare use the word conundrum because I totally botched it and announced my botching of it a couple of weeks ago. I'm still reeling from that. I was so confident in my pronunciation and enunciate and calling it "condundrum." That's not even a word. [Laughter] I tried to make it a word. It didn't work. It's conundrum.

It's a dilemma. It's a perplexing, you know, problem that you need to resolve and reconcile. And this is one of those cases. But the dilemma is resolved with the contrast in our answer being either foolish or wise.

Stay with me. We can answer the mocking fool with wise words, and God will provide us with the wisdom to discern whether the mocker needs an answer or needs an argument. Why am I saying like that? Because there are some people that just want to fight. They're not looking for an answer.

They're looking for an argument. In fact, they thrive on it. They have not had a good day unless they've gotten into it with somebody. And you know what I'm talking about, right? I mean, these are argumentative, combative people, and they want to argue. They thrive on it, the adrenaline. They're addicted to the adrenaline rush when you argue. And by the way, that is called adrenaline.

The Bible also calls the anger and argumentation, the argumentativeness sin. Just so we're clear. "Be angry and sin not." Well, there's an adrenaline rush. And you know, when you feel that adrenaline kick in? (Growling sound) Oh, yeah! That's what that is. Oh, did I strike a chord there? I'm not speaking of myself, of course.

So I'll just leave that with you and the Holy Spirit, maybe. But you got to discern that and God is going to give you that discernment. He's going to give you that wisdom from above to be able to discern, Wait a minute, now is this guy – does he just need an argument? He needs his argument fixed for the day. No. I'm out of here. No go. No can.

However, if he needs an answer lest he be wise in his own eyes, then it's incumbent upon me to answer this fool. Okay, so if they need only an argument, the best answer is no answer at all. And if they need an answer, the best answer are the words from the Word of God.

Oh, you can never go wrong with the Word of God. And I'm not talking about beating them over the head with Scripture. That can have the opposite effect. You end up creating the very thing you're trying to avoid. Your words are seasoned with grace. It's not what you say, it's how you say what you say.

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So I want to close with what I do personally. Well, I got to be careful here. Like I have arrived. (Chuckle) Oh, how I wish I have arrived. Oh, this is a big issue for me. I don't do well more times than I care to admit. Maybe I should rephrase it.

I'll close with what the Lord is... I'm going to back up. I even botched that one. This is hard for me, I have to confess. This is what the Lord has been ministering to me in this regard. That's better. I'm going to stick with that one. First – I wish I did this all the time. I do this – but I'll immediately pray. It does not have to be a, you know, it's just a quick prayer.

Oh, God. Oh, God! Help, please. I need wisdom and I need discernment. And I need the words that You would give me to speak in the moment that I am to speak them, in the way that I am to speak them.

And you know how it is when God does that and you respond? This is particularly pronounced in sharing the Gospel. And the Holy Spirit takes over and you let Him, okay, you don't grieve the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is speaking through you. And you know it's the Holy Spirit, because you know it's not you. And it's so good, you're like, Oh, this is really good! You almost want to like, you know, record it because it's not you, it's the Holy Spirit, and it just flows, and you know that the Holy Spirit is speaking through you to that individual, exactly what that individual needs to hear.

And that's the same thing here. Where you just ask God, Okay, God, give me the words, Your words to speak in love, in response as I answer this fool that apparently You brought into my path. Now, if and when the Holy Spirit prompts me, and this is important, it's a big if.

Because you've got to wait for – don't get ahead of the Holy Spirit on this. The Holy Spirit will prompt you. It'll be a prompting, a leading, and it will be evidence by the Holy Spirit giving you the Word of God, fitly spoken to answer with, which is the Word of God. And it might look like this and sound like this. It'll be a verse of Scripture. You've known it, but you've long ago forgotten it. You haven't even read it in your devotional time.

And all of a sudden, out of nowhere, the Holy Spirit brings it back to your remembrance. "Speak this." And you speak it. And that's the Holy Spirit. And that's how you answer them. You don't answer them with your words because that's – it's – get ready to rumble! But when it's the Word of God – because see, the Word of God is sharper than any two edged sword.

And it surgically, it cuts, it surgically cuts into and cuts out. That's the Word of God and it cuts to the heart, as we would say. Your words, they fall to the ground. God's word, they do not return void. They have the impact. And it's you know how this is where you can quote the word of God. And even sometimes as you're doing it, you're thinking, well, why this verse? Only to find out after, that they'll say, How did you know? You've been reading my mail? Did someone call you? That's exactly what I needed to hear.

And don't do this. Don't go, "Yeah, I knew that." No, you did not. The Holy Spirit knows the heart and He knows exactly what's going to speak to the heart. And you're just the mouthpiece. You're just the vessel through whom He speaks.

Now, there's one more side to this again. I'm going to flip it around and then we're done. If and when the Holy Spirit gives me pause. And you got to be really almost hypersensitive to that check in your spirit. Never, ever, ever go against it. Don't override the Holy Spirit.

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And what I mean by that is the Holy Spirit will just kind of check you and give you this pause like, “No, pull back, pull back. Don't push forward. Don't push this. Let Me lead this.” And when the Holy Spirit does that, it will look like this. There will be this bearing witness with your spirit and the Holy Spirit, that this is good between me and the Holy Spirit. “This is the way walking ye in it.”

And sometimes, gratefully, the Holy Spirit will make it so clear that a fool could not err thereof. And sometimes we need it to be where there's just this clarity and specificity that the best thing for me right now is to just not say anything.

Now you're in a conversation, and dare I say, even an argument and if you try to – because you're not listening to what they're saying. You're thinking about what you're going to say next. Come on. Isn't that how it works? I mean, oh, you're inserting the “Uh-huh, oh is that right” in the proper places until you mess up and then they catch you and bust you.

But you're just, you know, the courtesy, “Yeah. Hmm.” But you're not really listening. You're just thinking, you're formulating your response, your rebuttal, and you're waiting for the right time to forge ahead and just blast them. Don't do that. I do that. I got the scars to prove that. I wish I never did. But you just pull back and you listen and you wait. And here's what sometimes happens.

They end up saying it for you instead of you. That's the Holy Spirit. I like it when the Lord does that, because if you just give – I hate to say it like this, but it's true. You just give them enough rope to hang themselves. You know, you don't take the rope and (Choking sound) You know, you just say, Okay, go ahead, go ahead. Looks like you're doing a pretty good job without me. So go ahead. You just keep talking yourself into that puka. You're doing a great job.

And they end up basically making your argument for you and hopefully they realize that and they come to their senses and you've won them over. You've won them over. But that takes, again, discernment, spiritual discernment and wisdom from above.

So the next time someone mocks and by the way, that is getting worse, as Peter said it would, it's getting so bad. Oh, my goodness, I could tell you; I won't. I could tell you about all the – it's getting vicious. It's getting vile. It's getting foul, so foul. And it's just heartbreaking, really. And we – I'm talking about our staff when it comes to all of the mocking that we are on the receiving end of.

As you might imagine, it's voluminous and we just, we don't respond. We don't respond. And you know, I'm sorry, but that gets them. It's kind of like – So we'll get a – okay, just one. I'll just give you one. Is this okay? Too late. I'm kind of already in this. This is recent, too, by the way. This is the third time I've emailed you guys and you haven't responded! We don't – we stop there. We don't read the novel that follows because there's usually a novel that follows.

Oh, apparently us not responding, that's getting to you. Mm hmm. Is that sanctified? Let's say that it is.

Kapono come on up. Stand up. We'll close in prayer and song. I did my best Lord. You know. This is – I could have gone on when it comes to mocking and scoffing.

Oh, Lord, don't let us get caught up in the arguing, the fighting, the quarreling, the back and forth. Lord, give us wisdom and discernment and Lord, to be able to answer wisely, the fool, wisely with Your wisdom, the wisdom from above. Lord, thank You for this chapter. It's good. It's good. Thank You for including it in the record of this Book of Ezekiel.

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Lord, thank You for Ezekiel. We're learning so much from him, falling in love with him. What a precious young man at this point in this book as we're getting to know him. Lord, thank You for him and the many things that You want us to learn from him. Thank You. In Jesus' name, Amen.