

The Coming Judgment of God on Jerusalem

Chapters 4 - 24

Given before the siege of Jerusalem

EZEKIEL

Chapter 4

Signs Regarding the Judgments on Jerusalem

Ezekiel is going to do a number of symbolic acts representing the coming judgment on Jerusalem. Remember these chapters are **prior to the siege** the final destruction of Jerusalem. Ezekiel's task is to confront Israel with her sin and warn her of impending destruction. Ezekiel employed various means to focus on the people's need for judgment. These included: signs (chapters 4&5); sermons (chapters 6&7), and visions (chapters 8-11). In each case the emphasis was on sin and the ensuing suffering.

Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and pourtray upon it the city, even Jerusalem: And lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it; set the camp also against it, and set battering rams against it round about. Moreover take thou unto thee an iron pan, and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city: and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This shall be a sign to the house of Israel. (Ezekiel 4:1-3)

Playing War (1-3): Ezekiel was to take a tile (*clay brick, the main building material used in Babylon- Gen. 11:3*) and inscribe upon it the city of Jerusalem and then "lay siege" against it. Notice the instruments of war, "build a fort" "cast a mount" and "set battering rams." Ezekiel is then to take an iron pan and place it between himself and the city, thus indicating that they will not be able to fight against it; it will come to pass.

Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year. Therefore thou shalt set thy face toward the siege of Jerusalem, and thine arm shall be uncovered, and thou shalt prophesy against it. And, behold, I will lay bands upon thee, and thou shalt not turn thee from one side

to another, till thou hast ended the days of thy siege. (Ezekiel 4:4-8)

430 Years of Iniquity (4-8): Ezekiel is now to lie on his left side for the iniquity of the house of Israel (4-5). He is to do this for 390 days, each day representing a year and each year representing the years God bore the iniquity of the house of Israel. This could be reckoning from the first apostasy under Jeroboam to the Assyrian captivity. Be that as it may, the 390 years represented the time in which God bore the iniquity of the Northern tribes, until judgment came. God is able to bear them no more (Jer. 44:22).

Once these days are completed Ezekiel is told to lie on his right side and bear the iniquity of the house of Judah (v.6). He is to lie on his right side 40 days, each day representing a year that God had to bear the iniquity of the house of Judah. The final reckoning for both houses total 430 years of God bearing the iniquity of the whole house of Israel. With each side he laid on his respective arm was uncovered (v.7).

All this was to be done at a certain time of the day (v. 10) while he faced the "siege of Jerusalem" that he had made with the tile (v.7) and while he ate the meager food and drink mentioned in verses 9-11. Ezekiel was to be bound while this took place (v.8).

Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentiles, and millet, and fitches, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof, according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon thy side, three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof. And thy meat which thou shalt eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day: from time to time shalt thou eat it. Thou shalt drink also water by measure, the sixth part of an hin: from time to time shalt thou drink. And thou shalt eat it as barley cakes, and thou shalt bake it with dung that cometh out of man, in their sight. And the LORD said, Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them. Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! behold, my soul hath not been polluted: for from my youth up even till now have I not eaten of that which dieth of itself, or is torn in pieces; neither came there abominable flesh into my mouth. Then he said unto me, Lo, I have given thee cow's dung for man's dung, and thou shalt prepare thy bread therewith. Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment: That they may want bread and water, and be astonished one with another, and consume away for their iniquity. (Ezekiel 4:9-17)

Judgment of Famine (9-17): Ezekiel is now to prepare bread in the form of barley cakes (v.9,12). Both the food and the drink was to be only a meager amount (*Meat was twenty*

shekels weight, or about 8 oz a day, and the water ration was a sixth part of a hin, or about a pint and a half a day). All this was symbolic that famine was coming!

The meager food was to be prepared (*or baked v.12*) in an unclean manner (v.12-15). It was common in the desert or wilderness where trees would be scarce that cow dung mixed with straw would be used for fuel in baking. In order to put emphasis on the extreme famine coming, God told Ezekiel to use human dung because there would not even be cattle left to fuel their fires (v.12). However, later God conceded to Ezekiel's plea and allowed cow dung to be used instead, for the sake of this symbolic act (vs. 12-15). Thus, he was to eat his defiled bread among the Gentiles (Hos. 9:3,4).

The final siege of Jerusalem is recorded in 2 Kings 25:1-12. The siege lasted about a year and a half before its final destruction. It was during this year and a half that this great famine was experienced by God's people in Jerusalem (Lam. 4; Ezek. 5:10, 12, 16-17) as the Northern tribes had already experienced years earlier (2 Kings 6:24-29).

Ezekiel lying on his side looking toward the besieged city, bound, represents God, who is bound by the iniquity of the sins of Israel and Judah and can no longer bear them (Jer. 44:22). **The iron pan** placed between Ezekiel and the besieged city represents the reality that Israel's time for repenting is over, the heavens are as iron, God is not listening (Ezek. 8:18). **The tile with Jerusalem inscribed on it and the items of war laying siege against it**, represents what God is going to allow to happen to His beloved city (2 Kings 25:1-12). **The eating of the meager food prepared in an unclean manner** represents the severity of the famine that is coming (2 Kings 25:1-3).

EZEKIEL

Chapter 5

The Judgments of Thirds

Cutting Ezekiel's beard in thirds is symbolic of what God was doing with His people in Jerusalem (v. 8). God will judge a third by famine and pestilence, a third by sword, and a third will be scattered to the wind.

And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp knife, take thee a barber's razor, and cause it to pass upon thine head and upon thy beard: then take thee balances to weigh, and divide the hair. Thou shalt burn with fire a third part in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled: and thou shalt take a third part, and smite about it with a knife: and a third part thou shalt scatter in the wind; and I will draw out a sword after them. Thou shalt also take thereof a few in number, and bind them in thy skirts. Then take of them again, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; for thereof shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel. (Ezekiel 5:1-4)

Shaving of the Head and Beard (1-4): This symbolic act was figurative of wiping the city clean of its inhabitants (Isa. 7:20, 2 Kings 21:13). The weighing of the hair is to show that the judgment is just; it is from God.

A third of the hair is to be burnt with fire. This is the third that will be consumed with famine and pestilence (cf. v. 12). A third part is to be smitten with a knife. This is the third of the people that are to be smitten by the sword (cf. v. 12). And the last third is to be scattered in the wind; the final third that is scattered among the nations (cf. v. 12).

A few in number from the whole of the hairs (people) described above Ezekiel was to take and hide in his skirt or robe. This symbolic act was to represent the remnant that God would preserve; God is not going to completely obliterate His people (6:8).

Thus saith the Lord GOD; This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her. And she hath changed my judgments into wickedness more than the nations, and my statutes more than the countries that are round about her: for they have refused my judgments and my statutes, they have not walked in them. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye multiplied more

than the nations that are round about you, and have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept my judgments, neither have done according to the judgments of the nations that are round about you; Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations. And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thine abominations. Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds. Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD; Surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish thee; neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity. A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them. Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I the LORD have spoken it in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them. Moreover I will make thee waste, and a reproach among the nations that are round about thee, in the sight of all that pass by. So it shall be a reproach and a taunt, an instruction and an astonishment unto the nations that are round about thee, when I shall execute judgments in thee in anger and in fury and in furious rebukes. I the LORD have spoken it. When I shall send upon them the evil arrows of famine, which shall be for their destruction, and which I will send to destroy you: and I will increase the famine upon you, and will break your staff of bread: So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I the LORD have spoken it. (Ezekiel 5:5-17)

Vindication for God's Judgment (5-17): God describes the reasons for His fury against His people. They were called to be the salt (Matt. 5:13) and light (Matt. 5:14-16) to the heathen nations around them (See: Deut. 4:4-8), and instead they became more corrupt than those nations. Thus, God is stating that He is going to bring these judgments to pass; their opportunity for repentance is past (5:11).

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Chapter 6

Judgment Against the Entire Land of Israel

Ezekiel up to this point was using object lessons to convey the truth of coming judgments. Now he will elaborate on these object lessons. Up until this point the judgments were concerning Jerusalem. However, the prophet will now turn his attention to the whole land of Israel; judgment is coming to the entire land.

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them, And say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys; Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places. And your altars shall be desolate, and your images shall be broken: and I will cast down your slain men before your idols. And I will lay the dead carcasses of the children of Israel before their idols; and I will scatter your bones round about your altars. In all your dwellingplaces the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate; that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be abolished. And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall know that I am the LORD. (Ezekiel 6:1-7)

Judgment of the Entire Land of Israel (1-7): Ezekiel is now called upon to prophesy against the land itself. The land had become corrupted by false worship. Temples to pagan gods dotted the landscape. These temples and idols of false worship were erected upon the mountaintops and high places (note the terms “high places” and “groves” in reference to them). The conflict between true worship and false worship centered on these high places. Those who followed God tried to destroy the high places: Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:3-4) and Josiah (2 Kings 23:8-9); kings who did not follow God rebuilt them: Manasseh (2 Kings 21:1-6). In verse six we see the judgment upon these places of false worship that will ensue: **In all your dwellingplaces the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate; that your altars may be laid waste and made**

desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be abolished. (Ezekiel 6:6)

Yet will I leave a remnant, that ye may have some that shall escape the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the countries. And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols: and they shall lothe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations. And they shall know that I am the LORD, and that I have not said in vain that I would do this evil unto them. (Ezekiel 6:8-10)

The Continual Mercy of God (8-10): God's continual mercy is seen in the promised remnant of His people. Israel will not be utterly abolished (Jer. 43:5; Zeph. 2:7; Zech. 10:9, 12:2-3, 12:9-10; Rom. 9:6-13, 11:5-25).

Thus saith the Lord GOD; Smite with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot, and say, Alas for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel! for they shall fall by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence. He that is far off shall die of the pestilence; and he that is near shall fall by the sword; and he that remaineth and is besieged shall die by the famine: thus will I accomplish my fury upon them. Then shall ye know that I am the LORD, when their slain men shall be among their idols round about their altars, upon every high hill, in all the tops of the mountains, and under every green tree, and under every thick oak, the place where they did offer sweet savour to all their idols. So will I stretch out my hand upon them, and make the land desolate, yea, more desolate than the wilderness toward Diblath, in all their habitations: and they shall know that I am the LORD. (Ezekiel 6:11-14)

Totality of God's Judgment, the People, the False gods and the Land (11-14): The idols that were worshiped and burnt incense to, would now be covered with the smell of the rotting corpses of God's people. The land will become desolate (vs. 14).