

Pentwater Bible Church

Book of Ezekiel

Message 9

October 25, 2015



Ezekiel Cuts his hair and beard. Artist Unknown

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God Conditions The Prophet Ezekiel PART III

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GOD CONVEYS HUMILIATION THROUGH EZEKIEL

Ezekiel 5:1-12

¹ And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp sword; as a barber's razor shalt thou take it unto thee, and shalt cause it to pass upon thy head and upon thy beard: then take thee balances to weigh, and divide the hair. ² A third part shalt thou burn in the fire in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled; and thou shalt take a third part, and smite with the sword round about it; and a third part thou shalt scatter to the wind, and I will draw out a sword after them. ³ And thou shalt take thereof a few in number, and bind them in thy skirts. ⁴ And of these again shalt thou take, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; therefrom shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel.

⁵ Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: This is Jerusalem; I have set her in the midst of the nations, and countries are round about her. ⁶ And she hath rebelled against mine ordinances in doing wickedness more than the nations, and against my statutes more than the countries that are round about her; for they have rejected mine ordinances, and as for my statutes, they have not walked in them. ⁷ Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because ye are turbulent more than the nations that are round about you, and have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept mine ordinances, neither have done after the ordinances of the nations that are round about you; ⁸ therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I, even I, am against thee; and I will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments on thee; and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter unto all the winds. ¹¹ Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, 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, and I also will have no pity. ¹² 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 a third part I will scatter unto all the winds, and will draw out a sword after them (ASV, 1901).

EZEKIEL IS COMMANDED TO SHAVE HIS HEAD AND BEARD

Ezekiel 5:1

¹ And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp sword; as a barber's razor shalt

thou take it unto thee, and shalt cause it to pass upon thy head and upon thy beard: then take thee balances to weigh, and divide the hair (ASV, 1901).

This is the last of the series of symbolic acts God gave Ezekiel to give him empathy for God's feelings and attitude toward purposeful sin against Him. This particular illustration is one of humiliation that God wanted to convey toward His Chosen People the Jews. First, the sword (Hebrew *cherev*) is the common weapon used by ancient armies. It is used eighty-three times in this book in reference to the tool of judgment coming upon Jerusalem (Ezekiel 6:11), Edom (Ezekiel 25:13), Tyre (Ezekiel 26:6, 8), Egypt (Ezekiel 29:8-9; 30:4), and Gog (Ezekiel 38:21). This action which Ezekiel was about to undertake would humiliate him and cause him and the Jewish leaders who saw him to feel the shame and humiliation of God's judgment on the Nation Israel at Jerusalem if they did not turn from their sins. The idea of shaving a priest's hair violated the Mosaic Law, was a symbol of humiliation and mourning.

VIOLATED THE MOSAIC LAW

Leviticus 21:5; 19:27

⁴He shall not defile himself, being a chief man among his people, to profane himself. ⁵They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard, nor make any cuttings in their flesh (ASV, 1901).

²⁷Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard (ASV, 1901).

HUMILIATION

II Samuel 10:4-5

⁴So Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away. ⁵When they told it unto David, he sent to meet them; for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and then return (ASV, 1901).

A SIGN OF MOURNING

Job: 1:20-22; Isaiah 22:12; Jeremiah 7:29-30

²⁰Then Job arose, and rent his robe, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped; ²¹and he said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah. ²²In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly (ASV, 1901).

¹²And in that day did the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth (ASV, 1901).

²⁹*Cut off thy hair, O Jerusalem, and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on the bare heights; for Jehovah hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.* ³⁰*For the children of Judah have done that which is evil in my sight, saith Jehovah: they have set their abominations in the house, which is called by my name, to defile it (ASV, 1901).*

These three aspects, a violation of the Law is an insult to the priest Ezekiel, humiliation to God and the Jews, as well as the mourning would be associated with God, Ezekiel and the Jewish people. For God was humiliated that the Jews His chosen people would turn from Him and do heinous acts. He also would mourn for them as they suffered the divine judgment for their sins. God's judgment is accurate and proper (Jeremiah 15:2). The prophet Ezekiel has been given this mission to reach the Jews in Babylon as well as the Jews in Jerusalem via messenger. God tells Ezekiel that he must divide and weigh the hair he has cut off and divide it into three piles. The symbolism is clear; this is the disaster that would come upon Israel at Jerusalem because has weighed (evaluated) the sin and will bring the sword upon the unrepentant nation Israel with three different aspects. This same imagery of weighing is also used by God to convey judgment on Belshazzar's feast, which Daniel was brought in to interpret the text, which the moving hand wrote on the wall of the palace (Daniel 5:24-28).

HAIR REPRESENTS ASPECTS OF THE JUDGMENT

Ezekiel 5:2-4

²*A third part shalt thou burn in the fire in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled; and thou shalt take a third part, and smite with the sword round about it; and a third part thou shalt scatter to the wind, and I will draw out a sword after them.* ³*And thou shalt take thereof a few in number, and bind them in thy skirts.* ⁴*And of these again shalt thou take, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; therefrom shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel (ASV, 1901).*

First God says that one third of the hair he will *burn in the fire in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled*. So after Nebuchadnezzar has finished the siege of Jerusalem and Ezekiel finds out that the Babylonians have broken through the walls of the city and the slaughter is complete he will burn his hair. Remember he is in Babylon. Some Jewish commentators interpreted the 430 days given in the command for Ezekiel to lie on his sides as the length of the siege of Jerusalem.¹ For the second third pile of hair Ezekiel is told to *smite with the sword round about it*. For the last third Ezekiel is told by God that he should *scatter to the wind, and I will draw out a sword after them*. After the three piles have been weighed and distributed according to God's Divine commands Ezekiel is told to take a few of the hairs that were surplus which fell in the process of distributing them *and bind them in thy skirts*. This meant that he was to tuck them into the pouch of his gown. It was a long robe or a tunic that the men of that day wore. It had a sash or belt at the waist and the bottom was pulled up and tucked into the belt, which formed a pouch for carrying personal items. This is where Ezekiel placed the surplus hairs. With these extras he is told that he shall *cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire*. The symbolism

¹ Eisemann Rabbi Moshe; Sherman Rabbi Nosson quoting Rashi, *Yechezkel* published by Mesorah Publications Ltd. March 2009, pg. 119

of these actions will be revealed in the last portion of this chapter. For now the Lord wants Ezekiel to know and convey why He is doing these things to His people.

THE LORD STATES HIS REASON FOR THE SIEGE OF BABYLON

Ezekiel 5: 5-9

⁵*Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: This is Jerusalem; I have set her in the midst of the nations, and countries are round about her. ⁶And she hath rebelled against mine ordinances in doing wickedness more than the nations, and against my statutes more than the countries that are round about her; for they have rejected mine ordinances, and as for my statutes, they have not walked in them. ⁷Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because ye are turbulent more than the nations that are round about you, and have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept mine ordinances, neither have done after the ordinances of the nations that are round about you; ⁸therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I, even I, am against thee; and I will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations. ⁹And 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 (ASV, 1901).*

God says that all this represents Jerusalem His special chosen city and people. She has occupied a very special place both in Gods overall plan for this earth and as a result placed her at the gateway to three continents, Europe, Asia and Africa. Eerdmans Bible Dictionary cites the volume and path of some of those roads.

The courses of many roads of Israel from both OT and NT periods have been traced. Some 245 OT period roads have been identified, including 62 roads running north-south through Israel's coastal plain, 42 roads connecting the northern Sharon Plain with Transjordan and the *Begaa* Valley, 34 north-south roads through the highlands of Judea and Samaria, five north-south roads through the western Jordan Valley, 14 local roads in Galilee, 29 in Samaria, and 59 in Judea. Of these, six were particularly important in biblical times, including two north-south highways and four east-west roads. The most important was undoubtedly the main international coastal highway and its northern branches. This highway connected Egypt in the south with Phoenicia, Syria, and Mesopotamia in the north.²

The Jews were placed in a region with much traffic to tell the story of God's love for His creation and used them as witnesses. He blessed them with many favors including healthy dietary, sanitary, and social practices to set them apart from the rest of mankind. They would be desired by all nations for their intelligence and progress. Instead they followed the practices of the sinful nations surrounding them instead of imparting God's plan to them. Not only did they rebel but as God says, "they were *doing wickedness more than the nations, and against my statutes more than the countries that are round about her.*" Their standards of behavior were lower than the surrounding nations. Why did they suffer this invasion and the destruction of Jerusalem? Because as God says," *for they have rejected*

² Dorsey, D. A. (2000). Roads. In D. N. Freedman, A. C. Myers, & A. B. Beck (Eds.), *Eerdmans dictionary of the Bible* (pp. 1132–1133). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.

mine ordinances, and as for my statutes, they have not walked in them.” They simply took all the blessings of God and kept them but cast off the accountability to Him He required of them. He wanted to bless them and they turned away from Him. Does this sound familiar? The western nations of this earth have been blessed beyond reason. Instead of continuing to realize where these blessings came from we turn from God and commit abominable practices such as abortion and sexual deviancy. Both of these practices are clearly outside God’s Laws. We no longer are populated with some sinful people. Now we are a nation that has ordained into law these sinful practices for all to follow. We are a sinful nation. Our leaders have led us to these abominations and judgment is immanent. God judged the Israelites when the leaders gave in to sin and endorsed it to the population. He will do it to us too. God said that He. *“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.”* Interestingly the city and nation of favor would become the object of ridicule. This is a partial list of what the ancient Israelites were doing. Chapter eight will elaborate on this.

1. Male homosexual activity is an abomination to God (Leviticus 18:22)
2. Idolatry is an abomination to God (Deuteronomy 7:25)
3. Human sacrifice is an abomination to God (Deuteronomy 12:31)
4. Worship of idols is an abomination to God (Deuteronomy 13:14)
5. Worship of other gods is an abomination to God (Deuteronomy 17:4)

The activities of the Canaanites were an abomination to God from Deuteronomy 18:9:

1. To cause children pass through the fire (ancient child sacrifice).
2. That uses divination (fortune telling).
3. An observer of times (horoscope)
4. An enchanter, or a witch (black magic, casting spells)
5. Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits (a medium who connects to the occult).

GOD SPECIFIC JUDGMENTS OF THE HAIR

Ezekiel 5:10-12

¹⁰Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments on thee; and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter unto all the winds. ¹¹Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, 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, and I also will have no pity. ¹²A 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 a third part I will scatter unto all the winds, and will draw out a sword after them.

God now explains what the imagery of the actions meant which he called Ezekiel to perform. He says that during the siege *the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers.* He said that as a result of the Babylonians starving the inhabitants of Jerusalem out they would resort to cannibalism to survive. As for the scattering they Jews would no longer have a homeland but would live as sojourners in the

various countries in which they would be scattered. God would still love them and have a plan for them (Romans 11:25-32). It would be 2534 years before they would be again given their homeland.

Leviticus 26:44-45

⁴⁴And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them; for I am Jehovah their God; ⁴⁵but I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

Until the 1948 restoration of their sovereignty as a nation they would be living in the various countries of the world as strangers but continuing to maintain their separate identity as God's people. All this for their sins and especially for the sinful practices the leaders and spiritual leaders engaged in while causing the population to follow. They engaged in abdominal practices in the Temple, which will be highlighted in chapter 8. This is the specific nature of the three parts of the hair Ezekiel shaved.

1. *A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee;* Disease and famine will kill the first part.
2. *A third part shall fall by the sword round about thee.* The invading army will kill the second third.
3. *A third part I will scatter unto all the winds, and will draw out a sword after them.* Those who survived Jerusalem's fall to Babylon would be taken away in captivity and would live in fear.

NEXT MESSAGE: THE PUNISHMENT OF IDOLATERS

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments

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