

Pentwater Bible Church

Book of Ezekiel

Message 19

January 10, 2016



The Whirlwind by William Blake Cir 1803

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher

Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Ezekiel
Message Nineteen

The Lord Has Ezekiel Leave His Home

January 10, 2016

Daniel E. Woodhead

Ezekiel 12:1-16

¹ The word of Jehovah also came unto me, saying, ² Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of the rebellious house, that have eyes to see, and see not, that have ears to hear, and hear not; for they are a rebellious house. ³ Therefore, thou son of man, prepare thee stuff for removing, and remove by day in their sight; and thou shalt remove from thy place to another place in their sight: it may be they will consider, though they are a rebellious house. ⁴ And thou shalt bring forth thy stuff by day in their sight, as stuff for removing; and thou shalt go forth thyself at even in their sight, as when men go forth into exile. ⁵ Dig thou through the wall in their sight, and carry out thereby. ⁶ In their sight shalt thou bear it upon thy shoulder, and carry it forth in the dark; thou shalt cover thy face, that thou see not the land: for I have set thee for a sign unto the house of Israel.

⁷ And I did so as I was commanded: I brought forth my stuff by day, as stuff for removing, and in the even I digged through the wall with my hand; I brought it forth in the dark, and bare it upon my shoulder in their sight.

⁸ And in the morning came the word of Jehovah unto me, saying, ⁹ Son of man, hath not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said unto thee, What doest thou? ¹⁰ Say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: This burden concerneth the prince in Jerusalem, and all the house of Israel among whom they are. ¹¹ Say, I am your sign: like as I have done, so shall it be done unto them; they shall go into exile, into captivity. ¹² And the prince that is among them shall bear upon his shoulder in the dark, and shall go forth: they shall dig through the wall to carry out thereby: he shall cover his face, because he shall not see the land with his eyes. ¹³ My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare; and I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there. ¹⁴ And I will scatter toward every wind all that are round about him to help him, and all his bands; and I will draw out the sword after them. ¹⁵ And they shall know that I am Jehovah, when I shall disperse them among the nations, and scatter them through the countries. ¹⁶ But I will leave a few men of them from the sword, from the famine, and from the pestilence; that they may declare all their abominations among the nations whither they come; and they shall know that I am Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

THE UNWILLINGNESS OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL

Ezekiel 12:1-2

¹ *The word of Jehovah also came unto me, saying, ²Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of the rebellious house, that have eyes to see, and see not, that have ears to hear, and hear not; for they are a rebellious house (ASV, 1901).*

This chapter begins a new section in the book of Ezekiel. Whereas chapters 4-11 clearly prophesied the certainty of the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, chapters 12-19 define the reasons for it. The continued flagrant breaking of the moral order of God given to the Israelites is explained to be the cause of their exile. This message is given to the other exiles in Babylon who were just as stiff-necked as their compatriots in Jerusalem. The reoccurring problem with humankind is exemplified in God's declaration, "that have eyes to see, and see not, that have ears to hear, and hear not." One would expect that the events in Jerusalem, which were communicated to the exiles in Babylon, would have softened their hearts but this was not the case. They remained rebellious. In the previous chapter Ezekiel said, "²⁵Then I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that Jehovah had showed me." This did not move them to repentance. These designations regarding Israel's hard-heartedness are reoccurring throughout Scripture (Deuteronomy 29:1-4; Isaiah 6:9-10; Jeremiah 5:21; Matthew 13:13-15; Mark 8:18; John 12:39-40; Acts 28:29-27). The obdurate heart cannot receive the Word of God. Stephen's words are particularly poignant just before the Sanhedrin martyred him.

Acts 7: 51-53

⁵¹ *Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye. ⁵²Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them that showed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers; ⁵³ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not (ASV, 1901).*

If we are not hearing any resolution from God to our prayers it could very well be that He has hidden His face from us due to our neglects or sin that have grieved the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). We must examine ourselves to determine if we are stiff-necked too just as the ancient Israelites were. Are we rebellious to God's Word, His moral order? Do we want what we want more than what God wants for us and to do through us? Only through complete obedience to God through prayer and supplication will He reveal His will to us. This larger section of Scripture, going all the way back to chapter one, clearly demonstrates the Lord's long suffering and patience for His people. Long before He brings destruction He warns in a variety of ways. In this section He provides another physical activity through Ezekiel to dramatize the events that will take place in Jerusalem as a warning to the exiles in Babylon.

THE COMMAND TO PREPARE TO MOVE

Ezekiel 12:3

³ *Therefore, thou son of man, prepare thee stuff for removing, and remove by day in their sight; and thou shalt remove from thy place to another place in their sight: it may be they will consider, though they are a rebellious house (ASV, 1901).*

Now God tells Ezekiel to prepare the typical baggage and utensils which war refugees carry. This would be a minimum number of items that could be carried on their person. They would carry a flask, a bowl and a mat upon which to sleep. Ezekiel was to make this obvious to the exiles in Babylon so they would see exactly what God had been telling them. The visual enactment by Ezekiel of God's plans would make a lasting impression on them and they would be without excuse for not accepting the inevitable. Even though God knows the outcome of the exiles hearing and seeing of Ezekiel's acting out God's plan He says to Ezekiel, "*it may be they will consider.*" However, He concludes this phrase by saying, "*though they are a rebellious house.*" They don't believe Ezekiel and do not change.

EZEKIEL WILL DO IT IN THE OPEN

Ezekiel 12:4-6

⁴And thou shalt bring forth thy stuff by day in their sight, as stuff for removing; and thou shalt go forth thyself at even in their sight, as when men go forth into exile. ⁵Dig thou through the wall in their sight, and carry out thereby. ⁶In their sight shalt thou bear it upon thy shoulder, and carry it forth in the dark; thou shalt cover thy face, that thou see not the land: for I have set thee for a sign unto the house of Israel (ASV, 1901).

Again God says to bring the meager supplies during the day in full sight of the exiles in Babylon. Ezekiel was essentially playing the role of an exile reenacting the scene that the exiles had painfully experienced as well as all war refugees. This dramatic reenactment was done to try and convince them of what is going to happen as God carries out His deportation of the Jews in Jerusalem. This would happen regardless to popular opinion, which said they would not be deported and restoration to the land was imminent. The means of exit would be through a hole in the wall while the exiles watched. The symbolic representation must not be missed. In retrospect they would look back and learn that Zedekiah the king, not wanting to go out in the open while trying to escape the Babylonians, would go out through a tunnel leading into a cave. The hole he was told to dig must be real narrow just big enough for his tools and then for himself to go through it. To add additional reality to the actual events in Jerusalem he was told to do this in the dark with no illumination in secret like a man ashamed to be seen going out. The Royal Exiles in Jerusalem would not see what they were doing (II Kings 25:7) because Zedekiah was blinded and the symbolism Jeremiah 9:19b, which says, "*We are very much ashamed because we have left the land.*" is being brought out in the reenactment. They will not see the land because covering one's face in shame means to block one view.

EZEKIEL DOES THE LORD'S WILL

Ezekiel 12:7

⁷And I did so as I was commanded: I brought forth my stuff by day, as stuff for removing, and in the even I digged through the wall with my hand; I brought it forth in the dark, and bare it upon my shoulder in their sight (ASV, 1901).

Ezekiel now carries out the Lord's Will here by carrying his utensils digging through the wall at night with his hands. The exiles should have recognized these two activities, the preparation visible by day and the digging done at night. He was doing a theatrical exaggerated pantomime of the events taking place in Jerusalem to enhance the fact that this was genuine and not some figment of Ezekiel's imagination. Scripture does not say that Zedekiah actually dug a hole in the wall of Jerusalem. They did panic and flee when they saw the officers of the Babylonian army. Since this represents Zedekiah's leaving Jerusalem it qualifies as the basis for exactly how he left. Jeremiah says that he went out by way of the king's garden (Jeremiah 39:4). Which probably means that they came into the garden and fled out through the facing wall. They dug by hand and had no tools with which to dig. This must have greatly humiliated them. After all they were royalty.

THE LORD PROVIDES AN ANSWER TO THE EXILES QUESTIONS

Ezekiel 12:8-13

⁸And in the morning came the word of Jehovah unto me, saying, ⁹Son of man, hath not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said unto thee, What doest thou? ¹⁰Say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: This burden concerneth the prince in Jerusalem, and all the house of Israel among whom they are. ¹¹Say, I am your sign: like as I have done, so shall it be done unto them; they shall go into exile, into captivity. ¹²And the prince that is among them shall bear upon his shoulder in the dark, and shall go forth: they shall dig through the wall to carry out thereby: he shall cover his face, because he shall not see the land with his eyes. ¹³My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare; and I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there. (ASV, 1901).

From the text here we can surmise that the exiles asked Ezekiel what he was doing the previous evening with the kit of meager supplies. From this the actions of Ezekiel demonstrate that he actually acted them out and it was not visionary. Even though God came to him in a vision the activities he was requested to perform were carried out in front of the exiles as a warning to them of what was transpiring back in Jerusalem. Interestingly God does not refer to Zedekiah as King. He simply calls him prince. Jehoiachin was regarded as the genuine king (Ezekiel 17:13). This section prophecies the fleeing of Zedekiah and his entourage from Jerusalem to Riblah where the Babylonians caught them. God tells Ezekiel to, "*Say, I am your sign: like as I have done, so shall it be done unto them; they shall go into exile, into captivity.*" He is making a clear example of what is happening to Zedekiah and acting it out for the exiles in Babylon. Zedekiah will dig through the wall in the garden and try to hide his face to avoid detection as well as experience shame. God then tells Ezekiel that Zedekiah will be caught (*snare*) and be brought to Babylon where he will eventually die. The text closes with saying that Zedekiah although being in Babylon will not see it. This is because Nebuchadnezzar's men will have blinded him and carried him away to Babylon (II Kings 25:27-30).

ISRAEL TO BE SCATTERED

Ezekiel 12:14-15

¹⁴And I will scatter toward every wind all that are round about him to help him, and all his bands; and I will draw out the sword after them. ¹⁵And they

shall know that I am Jehovah, when I shall disperse them among the nations, and scatter them through the countries (ASV, 1901).

God intends to scatter Zedekiah's forces. He and the Babylonians did not want any of his supporters to try and rule in Babylon according to Zedekiah's policies. They will be too busy running for their lives to engage in a potentially seditious situation to the Babylonian rule. They will be running for their lives and therefore not be able to run an exiled resistance government, because the Lord will pursue them as he says *I will draw out the sword after them*. These are the Babylonian's swords He speaks of. This comes directly from the Lord's promises to them if they did not keep His commandments.

Leviticus 26:32-33

³²And I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies that dwell therein shall be astonished at it. ³³And you will I scatter among the nations, and I will draw out the sword after you: and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste (ASV, 1901).

This prophecy centers on the house of Zedekiah but it was a sign to the exiles and the whole house of Israel. They would share in all these events. If the exiles had any hopes for an early return to the land this should stem those expectations. It is clear from this book that Ezekiel began his prophecies in 592 B.C. When Jerusalem began to fall the communication between Jerusalem and Babylon ceased. Ezekiel would not know for sure of the fall of Jerusalem until his twelfth year or 585 B.C. (Ezekiel 33:21). One can only imagine the skeptical Jewish exiles in Babylon regarding the authenticity of Ezekiel's prophecies. All of this will result in the Jews being made aware of exactly who caused this, Jehovah God. They will be scattered among many countries, not just Babylon.

THE REMNANT REMAINS

Ezekiel 12:16

¹⁶But I will leave a few men of them from the sword, from the famine, and from the pestilence; that they may declare all their abominations among the nations whither they come; and they shall know that I am Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

Some of the exiles will be alive, fed, and not diseased. God wanted them to be able to relate these events as a warning to others. Since a third of the population of Jerusalem would be exiled a small number (Hebrew *meah mispar*) would be spared to form what could be called a repentant remnant. These people would be able and willing to declare to all who would hear them what Israel did to evoke such catastrophe from God. Once the world saw them it would be universally recognized that God caused this to happen to His Chosen People because He is Just. Exile and persecution bring many back to God's sovereign control which in turns yields blessing.

NEXT MESSAGE: EZEKIEL IS TOLD THAT THE BABYLONIAN ARMY IS NEAR COMPLETE VICTORY **Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments**
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