

Pentwater Bible Church

Book of Ezekiel

Message 12

November 15, 2015



The Vision of Ezekiel by Francisco Collantes Cir 1630

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher

Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Ezekiel
Message Eleven
Wealth Cannot Deliver
November 15, 2015
Daniel E. Woodhead

THE BABYLONIAN INVASION IS NEAR

Ezekiel 7:14-27

¹⁴They have blown the trumpet, and have made all ready; but none goeth to the battle; for my wrath is upon all the multitude thereof. ¹⁵The sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within: he that is in the field shall die with the sword: and he that is in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him. ¹⁶But those of them that escape shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them moaning, every one in his iniquity. ¹⁷All hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak as water. ¹⁸They shall also gird themselves with sackcloth, and horror shall cover them; and shame shall be upon all faces, and baldness upon all their heads. ¹⁹They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be as an unclean thing; their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of Jehovah: they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels; because it hath been the stumblingblock of their iniquity. ²⁰As for the beauty of his ornament, he set it in majesty; but they made the images of their abominations and their detestable things therein: therefore have I made it unto them as an unclean thing. ²¹And I will give it into the hands of the strangers for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil; and they shall profane it. ²²My face will I turn also from them, and they shall profane my secret place; and robbers shall enter into it, and profane it.

²³Make the chain; for the land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence. ²⁴Wherefore I will bring the worst of the nations, and they shall possess their houses: I will also make the pride of the strong to cease; and their holy places shall be profaned. ²⁵Destruction cometh; and they shall seek peace, and there shall be none. ²⁶Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumor shall be upon rumor; and they shall seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the elders. ²⁷The king shall mourn, and the prince shall be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people of the land shall be troubled: I will do unto them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them; and they shall know that I am Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

THE CALL TO BATTLE IS NOT ANSWERED

Ezekiel 7:14-15

¹⁴They have blown the trumpet, and have made all ready; but none goeth to the battle; for my wrath is upon all the multitude thereof ¹⁵The sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within: he that is in the field shall die with the sword: and he that is in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him. (ASV, 1901).

The call to arms was the blowing of the Shofar or rams horn. When Israel was threatened they were to blow the shofar signifying an enemy was near and the soldiers were needed to respond.

Numbers 10:9

⁹ And when ye go to war in your land against the adversary that oppreseth you, then ye shall sound an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before Jehovah your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies (ASV, 1901).

In this instance though God is preventing any response to the alarm. Those who should have responded are under God's wrath and can't or won't respond. Sword, pestilence and famine had already rendered the responders unable. The few that escaped would be only interested in saving themselves. The horror they experienced would lead to shame because they were derelict in their duty to respond to the trumpet's call. The blowing of the trumpets within Israel was of special significance. It carried with it the assurance that Jehovah heard and would be ready to fight for His people against their enemies. God had a different plan for Israel at this time than He did when He gave them the assurance in the Numbers ten passage. This time God was causing the invasion due to their massive amount of sins and the turning from Him to wickedness and other gods.

THE FATE OF THOSE WHO ESCAPE

Ezekiel 7:16

¹⁶But those of them that escape shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them moaning, every one in his iniquity (ASV, 1901).

The people who manage to escape the Babylonians swords will be sick from the famine and disease. God describes them to Ezekiel fleeing to the mountains with the spirit for fighting as a dove, which is the traditional symbol of love and peace. Mourning Doves have a soft, drawn-out call that sounds like a lamentation. This is hardly the proper response of a warrior to the trumpet call to protect Israel from her enemies. The Lord therefore describes the Israeli warriors who fled the city of Jerusalem as one moaning like the doves because they are experiencing God's reprisal for their gross wickedness. Their genuine enemies were themselves and their behavior not the Babylonians God brought in to carry out His judgment upon them.

THE SHAME OF DEFEAT

Ezekiel 7:17-18

¹⁷All hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak as water. ¹⁸They shall also gird themselves with sackcloth, and horror shall cover them; and shame shall be upon all faces, and baldness upon all their heads (ASV, 1901).

The response of the warriors is further described as *All hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak as water*. In keeping with the dove illustration they will have no initiative to fight. Their hands will be limp and therefore unable to hold a weapon or engage in a fight with the well-fed healthy Babylonian soldiers. Water having no consistency to support anything will be the way their leg's principal supporting joint the knee support them. The Hebrew suggests that their knees will be wet with urine. This gives additional insight into the fear the warriors face. They will be incontinent and release their urine upon their knees as they flee. The level of shame that will be heaped upon those whose sworn duty is was to fight for Israel will be enormous. Dressing in sackcloth and shaving their heads are symbolic expressions of strong heartfelt mourning (II Samuel 3:31; Isaiah 3:24). This will happen to all of the men who flee who were supposed to fight for Israel.

WEALTH WILL NOT DO THEM ANY GOOD

Ezekiel 7:19

¹⁹They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be as an unclean thing; their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of Jehovah: they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels; because it hath been the stumblingblock of their iniquity (ASV, 1901).

The wealth that they had accumulated will have no value to them in this time. They made idols out of silver and gold, which the Lord makes, reference to here as unclean things. Neither the idols nor the wealth can deliver them from God's wrath in that day. They cannot satisfy their souls with false idols or gold and silver. Many have tried to replace a relationship with God with wealth. It never satisfies the deep inner longings for peace and security that only God can give. Now that they are in a famine the wealth will not buy food for their stomachs because it is not available at any cost. They will cast their previously thought valuables to the ground because they will despise their true worthlessness. It cannot save them in the Lord's wrath. The Bible teaches us in the New Testament that similar conditions will exist during the end of the present age.

II Timothy 3:1-5

"Men shall be lovers of their own-selves, lovers of money (covetous) and lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God (KJV)"

The conditions of worldliness, apostasy, prosperity and trusting in wealth, which prevailed in Jerusalem before God, stripped the people and the land also characterizes our times. This will go on, and will become extremely excessive after the Lord has taken His true church into glory at the Rapture. Isaiah captures the Babylonian experience very well.

Isaiah 2:20-22

²⁰In that day men shall cast away their idols of silver, and their idols of gold, which have been made for them to worship, to the moles and to the bats; ²¹to go into the caverns of the rocks, and into the clefts of the ragged rocks, from before the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake mightily the earth. ²²Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of (ASV, 1901)?

Isaiah ends this passage with an admonition to stop trusting in man. This includes man made objects such as wealth and the idols they formed out of silver and gold. In the day of persecution they men will throw away their gold and silver idols to low unclean and undesirable creatures the rodents and bats. After which they will hide in caves and mountainous clefts away from the advancing Babylonian army, which the Lord has sent. God's terror is the result of them turning not to Him in worship but themselves and the work of their hands. The world worships something tangible like gold and silver. But the true precious give is a saving grace knowledge of God. Knowing who He is and where we are going is far more valuable than anything this earth has to offer.

GOD CANNOT BE BOUGHT

Ezekiel 7:20-22

²⁰As for the beauty of his ornament, he set it in majesty; but they made the images of their abominations and their detestable things therein: therefore have I made it unto them as an unclean thing. ²¹And I will give it into the hands of the strangers for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil; and they shall profane it. ²²My face will I turn also from them, and they shall profane my secret place; and robbers shall enter into it, and profane it (ASV, 1901).

The Temple is described as *the beauty of his ornament*. This was the glory of the beauty of the honor of God. God gave it to Israel so they could display Him to the world as He took up His throne in the Holy of Holies. They turned it into an abomination and put wicked detestable things into it. In chapter eight God will provide a separate vision to Ezekiel showing him exactly what the religious leaders back in Jerusalem were doing in the Temple. What God is saying here is that because of the Israelites abuse of His House the Temple and blaspheming Him He will give it over to the Babylonians described here as *the wicked of the earth*. What a sad picture this presents. The very house God built for Himself and His people Israel will be given to the pagan unbelieving Babylonians to destroy and profane in many ways. As the Jews profane the Temple by carrying out their wicked occultic practices in it God says I will give it to the truly wicked to rob it and destroy its sanctity. The Israelites placed their occultic images and practices in the Temple and God says he will make the Temple to them as a *niddah*, which is a woman menstruating. The Mosaic Law expressly forbid the menstruating woman from normal contact with others in Israel and she became unclean for seven days resulting in people distancing themselves. This is how they will think of their Temple, as an object to avoid.

Leviticus 15:19-24

¹⁹And if a woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be in her impurity seven days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean

until the even. ²⁰*And everything that she lieth upon in her impurity shall be unclean: everything also that she sitteth upon shall be unclean.* ²¹*And whosoever toucheth her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.* ²²*And whosoever toucheth anything that she sitteth upon shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.* ²³*And if it be on the bed, or on anything whereon she sitteth, when he toucheth it, he shall be unclean until the even.* ²⁴*And if any man lie with her, and her impurity be upon him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed whereon he lieth shall be unclean (ASV, 1901).*

As God turns His favor away from the Jews they profane His Holy of Holies all the more so He allows robbers and thieves to enter and remove the gold and special implements of worship. This was probably the time when the Ark of the Covenant was lost.

CAPTIVES LED AWAY IN CHAINS

Ezekiel 7:23-24

²³Make the chain; for the land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence. ²⁴Wherefore I will bring the worst of the nations, and they shall possess their houses: I will also make the pride of the strong to cease; and their holy places shall be profaned (ASV, 1901).

The Babylonians will lead the violent men that God accused of bloody crimes away in chains. This is exactly how their last King Zedekiah was led away from Riblah where he was caught attempting to escape in chains (II Kings 25:1-7). What He is saying is essentially that He will bring a very wicked group of people to exceed the wickedness the Jews were displaying before the world. The crimes the Jews committed deserved the death penalty and now they would get it directly through God. He would show them genuine professional wickedness. A city cannot live with such crime and wickedness. It loses its right to exist. God destroyed the earth's inhabitants once because it had become corrupt and filled with violence during Noah's day (Genesis 6:11). Now He was singling out His chosen people for their massive crimes against each other and Him. The Babylonians would take their houses, break their pride and make their idol ridden holy places to be obscene and filthy to them. Israel's haughty pride and religious prostitution would be crushed under the invasion of Babylon's army.

CAPTIVES SEEK PEACE BUT INSTEAD MOURN

Ezekiel 7:25-27

²⁵Destruction cometh; and they shall seek peace, and there shall be none. ²⁶Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumor shall be upon rumor; and they shall seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the elders. ²⁷The king shall mourn, and the prince shall be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people of the land shall be troubled: I will do unto them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them; and they shall know that I am Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

God now announces that the destruction of Jerusalem and its people has come. In their frightful attempts to get away they will seek to find some peace but there will not be any for them. The blows of misfortune would come in relentless waves one disaster after another so that it will seem to never end. Rumors will spread through Jerusalem saying there will be deliverers or reversals of their fate. This will be entirely gossip with no factual accuracy. The people will seek any source of comfort even the prophets, elders, and priests. This will fail too. They failed to heed the warning of the Lord's prophets earlier and no answer for them would be available now. The elders, prophets and priests will have lost their ability to lead with any effectiveness during the siege. All the prophets could say if they were truthful would be, "I told you so." The elders and priests were sinners to the extent that they lost their ability to teach anything of value to them. The last verse is a reference to Zedekiah the last king who Ezekiel called prince and the Jew Gedaliah who Nebuchadnezzar set up as governor over Jerusalem (Jeremiah 41:1-2). Nebuchadnezzar did not want turn the land of Judah into a complete desert. He let many of the poor remain in Judah to farm the land and to tend their vineyards. He appointed Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, as governor. Jeremiah went to Mizpah, just north of Jerusalem, where Gedaliah set up his office. Mizpah became also the spiritual center of the people.

Gedaliah was a wise man, gentle and modest. He zealously began to encourage the people to cultivate the fields and vineyards. Under the wise administration of Gedaliah, the Jewish community began to prosper. Many Jews who had fled to places of safety in neighboring lands during the destruction came to Gedaliah in Mizpah and were welcomed by him. He asked his brethren to remain loyal to the king of Babylonia, and promised them peace and security. The Babylonian garrison stationed in the land did not molest them—on the contrary, it offered them protection against unfriendly neighbors. The revived Jewish commonwealth was on its way to recovery when it was struck by a cowardly deed of treachery and bloodshed. Among the refugees who had joined Gedaliah in Mizpah was Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, a descendant of the royal house of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah. Ishmael began to plot against Gedaliah. He ultimately killed Gedaliah and all who were with him as well as the Babylonian garrison left by Nebuchadnezzar. God was giving Israel the just receipt of what they had earned, so He would be known among the Jews as the true God that loved them but was not going to condone sin. He was trying to heal them with Gedaliah's appointment and the Babylonian garrison being kind to them. Some still did not want what God offered.

NEXT MESSAGE: WICKED ABOMINATIONS CONTINUE IN THE TEMPLE

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments

E-mail info@pentwaterbiblechurch.com Toll Free 877-706-2479