

Pentwater Bible Church

Book of Ezekiel

Message 20

January 17, 2016



The prophet Ezekiel fresco in Basilica di Sant Agostino (Augustine) by Pietro Gagliardi Cir. 19th century

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher

Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Ezekiel

Message Twenty

Full Babylonian Captivity is at Hand

January 17, 2016

Daniel E. Woodhead

Ezekiel 12:17-28

¹⁷Moreover the word of Jehovah came to me, saying, ¹⁸Son of man, eat thy bread with quaking, and drink thy water with trembling and with fearfulness; ¹⁹and say unto the people of the land, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah concerning the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the land of Israel: They shall eat their bread with fearfulness, and drink their water in dismay, that her land may be desolate, and despoiled of all that is therein, because of the violence of all them that dwell therein. ²⁰And the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall be a desolation; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah.

²¹And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, ²²Son of man, what is this proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth? ²³Tell them therefore, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, The days are at hand, and the fulfilment of every vision. ²⁴For there shall be no more any false vision nor flattering divination within the house of Israel. ²⁵For I am Jehovah; I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall be performed; it shall be no more deferred: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I speak the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord Jehovah.

²⁶Again the word of Jehovah came to me, saying, ²⁷Son of man, behold, they of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of times that are far off. ²⁸Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: There shall none of my words be deferred any more, but the word which I shall speak shall be performed, saith the Lord Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

EZEKIEL IS CALLED AGAIN

Ezekiel 12:17

¹⁷Moreover the word of Jehovah came to me, saying, ¹⁸Son of man, eat thy bread with quaking, and drink thy water with trembling and with fearfulness (ASV, 1901).

Once more the Lord's servant Ezekiel is used to convey another message to the people. This time he is told to eat and drink with *quaking, trembling and with fearfulness*. This was primarily directed about those in Jerusalem even though there was no longer any communication between those in Jerusalem and where Ezekiel was in Babylon. We know the concept of the fear of the Lord found in the Proverbs, is a strong reverential trust. This

command to Ezekiel goes much further than that. It was meant to instill in him the knowledge of the impending disaster coming upon Jerusalem because of the sins of the leaders and their defiance of God's Law. Those around him would see him eating a meager meal of bread and water similar to what was left, if anything, in Jerusalem from the Babylonian siege. While he consumed the bread they would see him quaking (shaking and trembling) as he ingested it. Then while he drank water they would see him shaking continuously instilled with fearfulness. Ezekiel's direct communion with God allowed him first hand experience of what was going to happen to the citizens of Jerusalem. The visible nature of his reaction to God's Word would impart the message to the Jews in Babylon in graphic form to them who did not accept it and chose to believe the messages of the false prophets. As the proverb states they would truly fear God after He brought judgment and finally they would begin to be wise and understand who He is and what strength and control He exerts over all of the creation.

Proverbs 9:10

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding (KJV).

EZEKIEL IS TO TELL THE PEOPLE

Ezekiel 12:19

¹⁹and say unto the people of the land, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah concerning the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the land of Israel: They shall eat their bread with fearfulness, and drink their water in dismay, that her land may be desolate, and despoiled of all that is therein, because of the violence of all them that dwell therein (ASV, 1901).

Now God has Ezekiel say directly to the Jews in Babylon what conditions the people in Jerusalem are and will experience because of the violence the people are carrying out on each other. This is all due to the moral degeneracy of the leaders. Those in Jerusalem who survive will soon be joining the exiles in Babylon that Ezekiel is speaking to. Lack of moral conduct escalates into violence (Ezekiel 8:17). The description God gives is how the people of Jerusalem will eat and drink with a hand that resembles the palsy of Parkinson's disease, causing them to fumble and spill their water. The apostle Paul who was extremely close to the Lord had these words to say regarding God's revealing Himself to him. He understood God's power and providence. It caused him to tremble and shake. The inhabitants of Jerusalem were near to experiencing this and they would affirm this to the exiles when they joined them. They were trusting in man for their circumstances and would suffer for that illusion.

II Corinthians 2:1-5

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. ² For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. ³ And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. ⁴ And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in

demonstration of the Spirit and of power: ⁵ that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God (KJV).

COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL IS IMMANENT

Ezekiel 12:20

²⁰And the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall be a desolation; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

Jerusalem and its environs would soon be *laid waste*. The destruction would be horrible and it would be a difficult lesson for the Jews to learn about trusting in God instead of the morally degenerate leaders they were relying upon for their future. God says that as a result of the Babylonian invasion *ye shall know that I am Jehovah*. Similarly the apostle Paul said to the Corinthians that, “*your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*” Paul knew that only by a total reliance of God for all our circumstances would we ever experience the blessings He has for us. We should always trust Him first before we trust in men. God wants us to know Him well. We are all going to God when we leave this earth. We are not going to the opinion leaders of this world.

THE PROVERB

Ezekiel 12:21

²¹And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, ²²Son of man, what is this proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth (ASV, 1901)?

Two more oracles of God are given in this chapter. The first one given here is a proverb, which provides some usefulness of the prophetic word. The Lord cites a commonly held proverb that said, “The days grow long, and every predicted evil vision does not come to pass.” So when some evil event is predicted and there is a long time in passing without it occurring people begin to believe that it will not happen and the prophecy is not useful because it is not true. The problem with this view is that in the Bible all prophecies come true because the Lord has spoken it so they will come to pass. The Jews of previous generations understood this and some of the ones experiencing the Babylonian invasions as well. But most did not. This is a common view of many prophesied events even the Lord Jesus’ promised return.

II Peter 3:3-9

³knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, ⁴and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. ⁵For this they wilfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God; ⁶by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: ⁷but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. ⁸But forget not this one

*thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*⁹*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (ASV, 1901).*

THE LORD POURS SCORN ON THE PROPHECY

Ezekiel 12:23-24

²³Tell them therefore, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, The days are at hand, and the fulfilment of every vision. ²⁴For there shall be no more any false vision nor flattering divination within the house of Israel (ASV, 1901).

Because the false prophets had continually predicted that nothing bad was going to come to pass in Jerusalem God now tells Ezekiel to convey to the exiles what will happen. God says that this false proverb will be known as such soon. He tells Ezekiel to go and tell the exiles that soon God's Word predicting the last and most complete Babylonian invasion will occur. God said that the false visions and the predictions would cease.

Jeremiah tried and failed to convince king Zedekiah when asked. The false prophets caused him to be put in prison. So we shift to the scene in Jerusalem starting with Jeremiah being brought out of Jail to secretly tell the king what he was hearing from God. The king was afraid of the false prophets and the men so he called for Jeremiah to secretly come to him. This would cost him his life.

Jeremiah 37:16-21

¹⁶When Jeremiah was come into the dungeon-house, and into the cells, and Jeremiah had remained there many days; ¹⁷then Zedekiah the king sent, and fetched him: and the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, Is there any word from Jehovah? And Jeremiah said, There is. He said also, Thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon. ¹⁸Moreover Jeremiah said unto king Zedekiah, Wherein have I sinned against thee, or against thy servants, or against this people, that ye have put me in prison? ¹⁹Where now are your prophets that prophesied unto you, saying, The king of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against this land? ²⁰And now hear, I pray thee, O my lord the king: let my supplication, I pray thee, be presented before thee, that thou cause me not to return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there. ²¹Then Zedekiah the king commanded, and they committed Jeremiah into the court of the guard; and they gave him daily a loaf of bread out of the bakers' street, until all the bread in the city was spent. Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard (ASV, 1901).

Now the false prophets get wind of what Jeremiah told Zedekiah in secret and rose up against him causing the king to capitulate to the wishes of the false prophets. Zedekiah's poor excuse was that the king could do nothing to oppose them. Zedekiah was a political puppet of Nebuchadnezzar. He was incapable of making correct, independent decisions. He knew what Jeremiah said was true but was more afraid of men than God.

Jeremiah 38:1-6

¹And Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashhur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur the son of Malchijah, heard the words that Jeremiah spake unto all the people, saying, ²Thus saith Jehovah, He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey, and he shall live. ³Thus saith Jehovah, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it. ⁴Then the princes said unto the king, Let this man, we pray thee, be put to death; forasmuch as he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt. ⁵And Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he is in your hand; for the king is not he that can do anything against you. ⁶Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchijah the king's son, that was in the court of the guard: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire; and Jeremiah sank in the mire (ASV, 1901).

Now Jeremiah was cast into a dungeon and Zedekiah made the fatal mistake of following the false prophets and fearing city officials instead of the word that came from God through Jeremiah. They lowered Jeremiah into a large old cistern that was used for gathering rainwater in winter, which is the rainy season. The water was then brought out in the dry seasons. It was so deep that they had to lower him into it with ropes. It was void of water with only mud at the bottom into which Jeremiah sank. It has to be realized that speaking the truth will result in persecution in this world. Even from those who seem to be believers. Zedekiah seemed to believe Jeremiah but would only see him secretly. He was afraid of what others would think. Jeremiah and Ezekiel were considered prophets of doom, so the people rejected their messages and held to a false hope of restoration.

Nothing has changed. Today when we speak the truth in love we are excoriated and told that it is not “politically correct” to say what is truthful. The Bible guarantees our suffering when we are God’s children. Jesus said this is because evil men love the darkness more than the light of God’s truth (John 3:19).

However, God is saying to the exiles in Babylon through Ezekiel that this practice of following false prophets is over. He says, “*For there shall be no more any false vision nor flattering divination within the house of Israel.*” It will take the severe judgment of God to change the so-called *flattering divination* in Israel or the “political correctness” in our present age. They are the same. Truth is being sacrificed for political correctness. When God brings His massive judgment on this earth to make an end of sin, people will be so surprised because they believed the lies promulgated. In the Great Tribulation though they will be sent a strong delusion so they can’t change their attitude to one of belief (II Thessalonians 2:11).

GOD ASSURES THE SANCTITY OF HIS WORD

Ezekiel 12:25

²⁵For I am Jehovah; I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall be performed; it shall be no more deferred: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I speak the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

Now God assures Ezekiel that all of what He prophecies will come to pass. There will be no more delay. God assures us that the factual nature of His prophecies are guaranteed to come to pass because He will do them. There is no happenstance associated with His Word. It is a direct cause and effect. God speaks and what He decrees happens.

GOD RECAPS THE PROMISE WITH THE SECOND PROVERB

Ezekiel 12:26-27

²⁶Again the word of Jehovah came to me, saying, ²⁷Son of man, behold, they of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of times that are far off. ²⁸Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: There shall none of my words be deferred any more, but the word which I shall speak shall be performed, saith the Lord Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

Finally God comes again in a second proverb affirming everything He just said to Ezekiel. This affirmation repeating the components of the last prophecy strengthens it and makes it all the more urgent. Here He closes with the statement regarding its immanency. He focuses on what is being said by the exiles that “might” have believed Ezekiel. They were saying that what Ezekiel is seeing in his visions if they are true is a long way off. This is quite true of all naysayers regarding the prophetic parts of Scripture. They say the last days for example are a long way off or these prophecies are for another generation. It is interesting how the human mind seeking itself instead of God affirms their desire as truth. God is saying otherwise. He says, “*There shall none of my words be deferred any more, but the word which I shall speak shall be performed.*” God said it and He will do it. Remember the words of Peter affirming the certainty of God’s coming judgment on the entire world. He uses a common reference to time compared to eternity where there is no time.

II Peter 3:8-10

⁸But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up (ASV, 1901).

NEXT MESSAGE: THE LORD HATES LYING PROPHETS

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments

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