

Pentwater Bible Church

Book of Ezekiel

Message 50

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The Boiling Pot Artist Unknown.

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THE PARABLE OF THE BOILING POT

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Ezekiel 24:1-14

Again, in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, ²Son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this selfsame day: the king of Babylon drew close unto Jerusalem this selfsame day. ³And utter a parable unto the rebellious house, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Set on the caldron, set it on, and also pour water into it: ⁴gather the pieces thereof into it, even every good piece, the thigh, and the shoulder; fill it with the choice bones. ⁵Take the choice of the flock, and also a pile of wood for the bones under the caldron; make it boil well; yea, let the bones thereof be boiled in the midst of it.

⁶Wherefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Woe to the bloody city, to the caldron whose rust is therein, and whose rust is not gone out of it! take out of it piece after piece; No lot is fallen upon it. ⁷For her blood is in the midst of her; she set it upon the bare rock; she poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust. ⁸That it may cause wrath to come up to take vengeance, I have set her blood upon the bare rock, that it should not be covered. ⁹Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Woe to the bloody city! I also will make the pile great. ¹⁰Heap on the wood, make the fire hot, boil well the flesh, and make thick the broth, and let the bones be burned. ¹¹Then set it empty upon the coals thereof, that it may be hot, and the brass thereof may burn, and that the filthiness of it may be molten in it, that the rust of it may be consumed. ¹²She hath wearied herself with toil; yet her great rust goeth not forth out of her; her rust goeth not forth by fire. ¹³In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have cleansed thee and thou wast not cleansed, thou shalt not be cleansed from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my wrath toward thee to rest. ¹⁴I, Jehovah, have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it: I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

DATING THE JUDGMENT

Ezekiel 24:1-2

¹Again, in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, ²Son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this selfsame day: the king of Babylon drew close unto Jerusalem this selfsame day^{3a} And utter a parable unto the rebellious house, and say unto them, (ASV, 1901).

This verse started with Ezekiel stating the date this message from God was given. On January 15, 588 B.C. of the Gregorian also known as the western calendar this message was received by Ezekiel. This most significant event was also recorded in three other places in the Old Testament.

II Kings 25:1

And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and encamped against it; and they built forts against it round about (ASV, 1901).

Jeremiah 39:1

¹ *In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army against Jerusalem, and besieged it (ASV, 1901).*

Jeremiah 52:4

⁴ *And it came to pass in the ninth year of his (Zedekiah) reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and encamped against it; and they built forts against it round about (ASV, 1901).*

This message included three sections of the parable each introduced with a *Thus saith the Lord Jehovah*. The entire message is also divided into five sections.

1. The assignment of the message to Ezekiel by God (vv. 1-3a).
2. The boiling pot (vv.3b-5).
3. The rusted pot (vv.6-8).
4. The hopeless pot (vv.9-12).
5. Conclusion (vv.13-14).

This was the long prophecied day when the Babylonian army under Nebuchadnezzar set their siege against Jerusalem. This started two and a half years before the destruction of the Temple. This day was very significant since Jehovah God had Ezekiel who was three hundred miles from Jerusalem telling others about it for four years in advance. God had Ezekiel write down His Word so others would know that God was carrying out His will exactly as He had warned. This would be proof for future generations that God does exactly what He says He will do and speaks accurately through His prophets (Amos 3:7). This day was so significant that the Jews themselves mourned it through fasts for many years. The fasts were man initiated and not a command from God. If any usefulness was to come of the fasts it should have been repentance. This fast was addressed by God to the prophet Zechariah (Zechariah 8:19). He admonished them for their self-serving fasting, which was not coupled with repentance for what they had done. It was simply an attempt at penance, which is not a biblical truth. True repentance means you have turned away from your sin. Penance is man's attempt to provide some self-atonement for his sin through a physical action with no change of heart, and is not repentance. God wanted the Jews in Zechariah's day to connect with Him and establish a relationship with Him. He did not want them going through the motions of a ceremony to commemorate an event that they caused

themselves. The fast of the fourth month (in the Jewish calendar it is the month of Tammuz) commemorated the breaching of the walls of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. This was followed by a famine of Israel, which was Babylonian induced, and is a typical wartime strategy. Once the enemy has been starved out, their resistance is feeble. This prophecy was given on the 10th day of Tebet on the Jewish orthodox religious calendar and was the very day Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem

THE BOILING POT

Ezekiel 24:3b-5

^{3b} Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Set on the caldron, set it on, and also pour water into it: ⁴gather the pieces thereof into it, even every good piece, the thigh, and the shoulder; fill it with the choice bones. ⁵Take the choice of the flock, and also a pile of wood for the bones under the caldron; make it boil well; yea, let the bones thereof be boiled in the midst of it (ASV, 1901).

The imagery that the Lord is providing here is quite vivid. Jerusalem is viewed as a cooking pot filled with water and set to boil. The people had been misled into thinking that the cauldron was a protective device and the flesh was the protected population who were inside the safety of the pot (Ezekiel 11:3). God is now saying that the cauldron is the city of Jerusalem, the fire is the invading Babylonian army and the flesh is indeed them but they will not be protected. Further, the pieces or the good pieces are the princes and the chief men of Judah. This imagery is depicting a special elevated heat to make the choicest flesh boil well. In order to boil away even the bones a special level of fire is needed. Ezekiel is told that a “pile of wood” under the cauldron will be sufficiently large to produce a significant fire to even eliminate the bones. Micah also used this imagery of the boiling pot to reflect God’s displeasure with the leaders of Israel.

Micah 3:1-4

And I said, Hear, I pray you, ye heads of Jacob, and rulers of the house of Israel: is it not for you to know justice? ²ye who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones; ³who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron. ⁴Then shall they cry unto Jehovah, but he will not answer them; yea, he will hide his face from them at that time, according as they have wrought evil in their doings (ASV, 1901).

THE RUSTED POT

Ezekiel 24:6-8

⁶Wherefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Woe to the bloody city, to the caldron whose rust is therein, and whose rust is not gone out of it! take out of it piece after piece; No lot is fallen upon it. ⁷For her blood is in the midst of her; she set it upon the bare rock; she poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust. ⁸That it may cause wrath to come up to take vengeance, I have set her blood upon the bare rock, that it should not be covered (ASV, 1901).

God brings a woe to Jerusalem. A biblical woe denotes a condition to be dreaded, which signifies impending doom, condemnation, and the terrible wrath of God. It is not a simple warning. It means much more about what will follow it. Normally the fatty or inedible parts of the meat would be removed prior to cooking. The rust represents this inedible or undesirable part and it is left on the pot to also be consumed by the fire. Jerusalem's sins and the sinners were still within the city, they had not repented and now are viewed by God as filth, stain or corrosion (rust) of the city. The is a representation of the blood of victims slain in sacrifice and oppression by the leaders and their evil followers. The text *take out of it piece after piece*; represents the usual way the Israelites would divide the meat when cooked. They would draw lots to decide who receives each portion. In this imagery though the representation is characterizing those inhabitants of Jerusalem who were to surrender in a piecemeal or divided manner seeking the best terms available from the Babylonians. So one group after another went out to surrender to the Babylonians. *No lot is fallen upon it* is a reference to the typical manner of surrendering in that lots or having some drawing to determine who would surrender to satisfy the invaders while the rest stayed in the city. In this instance there would be no lot and all would surrender. Jerusalem's bloody crimes were obvious to all, and the leaders and the people made no attempt to cover them (v. 7). The lack of concern for covering the blood of people slain was further evidence of the cruelty, heartlessness, and failure to observe God's laws which required that the blood of a sacrifice be covered.

Leviticus 17:13

¹³And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, who taketh in hunting any beast or bird that may be eaten; he shall pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust (ASV, 1901).

God noted Jerusalem's callous disregard for the sanctity of human life and vowed to leave the bloodstains out in the open as a witness to the city's guilt (v. 8). So even though there was judgmental destruction in the early stages of the exile, God wanted to remind them of their guilt. Jerusalem had not even tried to cover the murder and violence in its midst. There was such total disregard for the law of God that human life was of little value. Their unabashed transgressions of the law deliberately provoked the righteous indignation of a holy God. Any nation that kills so wantonly can expect the judgment of God.

THE HOPELESS POT

Ezekiel 24:9-12

⁹Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Woe to the bloody city! I also will make the pile great. ¹⁰Heap on the wood, make the fire hot, boil well the flesh, and make thick the broth, and let the bones be burned. ¹¹Then set it empty upon the coals thereof, that it may be hot, and the brass thereof may burn, and that the filthiness of it may be molten in it, that the rust of it may be consumed. ¹²She hath wearied herself with toil; yet her great rust goeth not forth out of her; her rust goeth not forth by fire (ASV, 1901).

Because the blood lies upon the ground is visible to all, these events will not be forgotten by God. He says, "*Woe to the bloody city!*" God Himself is going to increase the fire

under the city. He is leading the Babylonians into the city and will cause them to increase the fierceness of their warriors coming in to Jerusalem. They will spare nobody and have no mercy because of the influence and persuasion of the God of the Israelites from whom they turned away. The contents of the pot were cooked, then charred (v. 10), poured on the fire, and finally burned away like the impurities in the smelting process (v. 11). The symbolic act of pouring the contents of the cauldron on the fire and burning what ever is left is a demonstration that there is no hope for Jerusalem. The certainty of the destruction underway was being demonstrated and communicated with this imagery. To further communicate the extent of His wrath He says that the pot itself when empty will be *set empty upon the coals thereof, that it may be hot, and the brass thereof may burn, and that the filthiness of it may be molten in it, that the rust of it may be consumed*. Nothing was to remain of Jerusalem; all would be consumed in the fire including the main issue, the rust which represents the contamination of Jerusalem. Any thoughts of preserving Jerusalem were hopeless. Nothing will remain as a reminder of its past. Only by the cleansing fire of destruction can Jerusalem become clean. What the Lord hath spoken will come to pass; He will do exactly what His solemn word says. People of all ages and countries ignore what God has spoken. Still others sneer at it and in their unbelief malign what He has said. The present mass of so called professing Christians are indifferent and ignore what God said He will do. Just as all the prophets have been ignored in the past, the clear message of the prophecies of the Bible today are ignored. The God of all creation has spoken about judgments to come. They will surely come upon our age, as the prophecied judgments came upon Jerusalem.

CONCLUSION

Ezekiel 24:13-14

¹³In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have cleansed thee and thou wast not cleansed, thou shalt not be cleansed from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my wrath toward thee to rest. ¹⁴I, Jehovah, have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it: I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

God exhorts the Jews saying, “ *because I have cleansed thee and thou wast not cleansed, thou shalt not be cleansed from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my wrath toward thee to rest.*” For years He sent His prophets and they were ignored and mistreated even as Jesus said (Luke 13:34). There was only one method left to cleanse the sin and the filthiness of their lewdness. That was a complete unleashing of God’s fury upon them. The time had finally come for the wrath to fall and it will not abate until destruction is complete. The judgment is all because of the Jews heinous behavior resulting in an equitable punishment.

NEXT MESSAGE: THE DEATH OF EZEKIEL’S WIFE

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