

Ezekiel, Son of Man
Class 4 - April 23, 2014
Reading: Ezekiel 12-15

Chapter 12

Once more Ezekiel is called to bear a physical burden to be a spiritual truth. This time he is required to become an exile. He must make a hole in the wall (of his home, presumably) and then move his belongings out, to enact the exile that the Jews must soon bear.

Ezekiel must act this out with his head covered. This symbolizes that the prince of Judah will not see the land of his home, nor of his captivity. This prophecy was fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar surrounded Jerusalem a few years later:

2 Kings 25:4a Then the city wall was broken through, and all the men of war fled at night by way of the gate between two walls, which was by the king's garden.....7 Then they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him with bronze fetters, and took him to Babylon.

The second part of the chapter is a subsequent message from God. Now Ezekiel must eat bread and drink water with anxiety, to reflect on the fear Judah must experience as they are destroyed by God's emissaries.

Finally, God points Ezekiel to a proverb the people have: "*the days are long, and every vision fails*". This proverb is the same as mentioned by Peter: "*Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.*" (2 Peter 3:4). God had promised a day of retribution for some time; many of Isaiah's prophecies deal with these things. Just as Peter explains, God's waiting was a reflection of His mercy. However, God made clear that He carries out His promises, for good or for evil:

Numbers 23:19 "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good"

Chapter 13

One of the greatest plagues that Judah suffered was that of false prophets. These were men who claimed to speak for God, but did not. Jeremiah personally battled with false prophets (Jeremiah 14:14), specifically, the false prophet Hananiah (Jeremiah 28), who is likely prophesying as Ezekiel is being instructed. These prophets said that God's wrath was not coming, and that God would not forsake Judah: they predict "peace" when there will be no peace.

The warnings of false prophets has been a standard of God since Moses brought the law. In Deuteronomy 13:1-5, we are told that God taught that if a prophet taught the children of Judah contrary to His commandments, he was a false prophet. In Deuteronomy 18:19-22 He said that if a prophet made a prediction which failed, he was a false prophet. In both cases, the false prophet should be put to death.

God also command Ezekiel to prophesy against the mysticism (perhaps witchcraft) of the women of Judah, who are practicing a divination of a sort. This practice cause the righteous to die and the wicked

to live; specifically, it disheartened the righteous, and uplifted the wicked. This divination is still used today; those who practice kabala still wear strings wrapped around their wrists.

Several point so importance are here. First, the issue of mysticism as a means of discerning God is a point we cannot miss today. Second, the concept of uplifting the unrighteous while bringing down the righteous too must be addressed. To the latter point, can we not point out the problem of failing to practice church discipline?

Chapter 14

The elders of Israel have come to Ezekiel, apparently to inquire of God. God delivers a message to Ezekiel: He will not be consulted by these men, nor will He consult them. Can we see God's offense? Judah practices idolatry, yet when the stakes become too high, they turn to Jehovah. Yet still, the idols are there, in their hearts.

Even more frightening, God says that He intends to answer those who have idols, but still come before Him. He will even punish the prophet who speaks for them.

Finally, God makes the promise that even if righteous men came to the land, He would still end it. Noah was preserved because he found grace before God. If Noah were in Judah, only Noah (not even his children) would survive. Job was a blameless man before God; even if he dwelled in Judah, it would not avail Judah. Finally, Daniel, who was at that time alive and in Babylon, could not deflect God's wrath.

In other words, there was absolutely nothing that could be done by Judah to avoid the punishment that God was prepared to bring out on them.

Chapter 15

A brief message from God comes to the Son of Man. Judah is like a branch of wood. They have charred both ends of their spiritual selves, and now that they are damaged, seek to be used by God. God has no use for wood already burned. He then likens Judah to wood which cannot escape being destroyed. This point is to say that Judah will not escape their destruction. There will be no reprieve or delay; God has turned His back on them.