

Ezekiel, Son of Man  
Class 2 - April 9, 2014  
Reading: Ezekiel 4-7

#### **Chapter 4**

Ezekiel is called on again to suffer an outrageous indignation. He must draw a model of Jerusalem in clay, then build a diorama of a siege against Jerusalem. This model is to teach Israel of what God has in store for their great city. Yet this is not the indignation of which Ezekiel must bear. For the next year (390 days) he is to preach laying on his left side. Then, when that time is completed, he would lay for 40 days on his right side. God will "constrain" him to prevent him from moving.

He will eat a bread made from the grains fed to animals or the truly impoverished (in other words the bread of a people cut off from their food). He will not even be allowed to eat as much as he desires; every day he will only receive a measure of this food. Eight ounces of bread a day. One liter of water a day.

But here is what is the real offense: He must make it over a fire of human feces. In fact, the Septuagint says that the bread itself is to be covered with dung. Let us presume the less offensive manner of consumption. One can only imagine the horrible smell and taste of such a diet, and the man who would be forced to endure it. At this point, Ezekiel begs God to reconsider. God relents, and he must then only endure the less unbearable torment of eating such a meal over cow dung.

Why such a harsh image? For one thing, the sight and smell of this man among the Jews would bring them to know of his message. His humiliation would draw them to him, and to see the besieged Jerusalem. They would know that no man would suffer this of his own volition; this was a prophet of God. Secondly, this served to show them of the humiliation that would come the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

It is a hard thing to be a prophet to an unrepentant people.

#### **Chapter 5**

Ezekiel must now shave with a sword. In the customs of the people of the middle east, shaving the head or beard was a sign either of extreme sorrow or shame. David was furious when Hanun shaved his men to shame them (I Chronicles 19:4). Job shaved his head to show his sorrow (Job 1:20). God promised that the nation of Judah would be shaven bald in their sorrow (Ezekiel 27:31). Now must Ezekiel be shaven to show the shame of Israel and the sorrow of God.

But it is not enough to do this; he must do so with a sword. There are images of Nazi soldiers shaving their enemies with knives; when done, their faces were bloodied and scarred. Is such the case with Ezekiel? He collects this hair, and burns one-third, scatters one-third, and preserves one-third.

This message speaks to God casting off Judah. It causes Him great pain. God says He has been "crushed" by their adulterous heart in chapter 6:9. So He is like Ezekiel, shamed by their conduct, cut by their iniquities. Judah is that which has been cast off. One third will fall to the sword, and one third to the famine (and pestilence) that would devastate Judah when Nebuchadnezzar came. Yet there would still be one third which would remain with God; this third is called the remnant in chapter 6:8.

It cannot be emphasized enough the great tribulation that Israel will suffer in the coming years. Most of the nation is going to perish. We see that of the millions who leave into captivity, only 42,000 return with Zerubbabel. God repeatedly describes His fury, anger, vengeance and zeal. Hebrews 10:31 *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

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## **Chapter 6**

God continues to speak with Ezekiel about the spiritual adultery of Israel. He curses their false worship of idols and their worship in the high places. He curses the land itself, the subject of the blessing that was theirs under the covenant of Moses. Finally, He once more promises that a remnant will be preserved.

We will focus here on the worship in the high places (we will focus on the idolatry of Israel in chapter 8). The interesting thing about the worship in the high places is that it was not false gods, but Jehovah, who was worshipped in these places. Repeatedly in the Old Testament, this fact is made clear (1 Kings 3:2, 2 Kings 18:11, 2 Chronicles 33:17 *Nevertheless the people still sacrificed on the high places, but only to the LORD their God.*) God called this worship an abomination, and yet we ought to consider for a moment what it meant, and why it offended Jehovah.

Worship in high places is a typical style of ancient worship. From the acropolis of Athens (meaning High city) to the world's pyramids, to the Celts of England or mound builders of North America, pagans (meaning "hills", as in Areopagus/Mars Hill) climbed up to worship. Perhaps it leads back to the tower of Babel itself, a way to come to meet God as an equal. In the case of Israel, it was worshipping Jehovah in the style of the pagans.

God calls this an abomination, not because of the hill, but because the intent and purpose of these false worshippers was to emulate others rather than to please God. We might find the same abomination in building places of worship that emulate the denominations today.

## **Chapter 7**

God now delivers a psalm about His destruction of Israel, specifically Jerusalem. The expression "day of the Lord", commonly found in the Old Testament, and commonly misunderstood by many today, is used to describe here the destruction of Jerusalem. God revisits this term in Ezekiel 13:5 and 30:3.

The language once more speaks to the horror of God's coming punishment. He will be without pity and mercy. We know that this is not the act of a God who is merciless and pitiless, but a Father who has been utterly rejected by His children. The violence will be so great that the land itself will suffer.