

Ezekiel Chapter 12

Ezekiel 12:1 "The word of the LORD also came unto me, saying,"

The vision of Ezekiel ended in the last lesson. Now this Word of God was spoken to Ezekiel, and not in a vision.

Ezekiel 12:2 "Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they [are] a rebellious house."

The message of Ezekiel was addressed to his fellow exiles who were as hardened as those still in Jerusalem. They were so intent on a quick return to Jerusalem, that they would not accept his message of Jerusalem's destruction.

Their rebellion was against God. They were not obedient. They were stiff-necked and rebelled against all authority over them. They hear the message Ezekiel brings them with their outer ears, but they do not take it into their beings. They can actually see the captivity around them, but they still do not believe it to be punishment from God for their sins. Rebellion is a serious sin.

1 Samuel 15:23: "For rebellion [is as] the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness [is as] iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from [being] king."

Ezekiel 12:3 "Therefore, thou son of man, prepare thee stuff for removing, and remove by day in their sight; and thou shalt remove from thy place to another place in their sight: it may be they will consider, though they [be] a rebellious house."

Prepare thee stuff for removing means "prepare your baggage". Later, Ezekiel is commanded to carry the baggage through a hole in the wall. The significance of these strange actions is clearly explained: preparing the baggage represents the inhabitants of Jerusalem who must pack their bags and go into captivity. The exit through the hole in the wall pictured the vain attempt of king Zedekiah to escape from Nebuchadnezzar. Both of these prophetic actions were literally fulfilled when Jerusalem was destroyed (in 586 B.C.). The people were taken captive and Zedekiah's attempted escape was foiled. He was compelled to watch his sons slain before his eyes. His eyes were then blinded, and he was taken to Babylon.

God has not been able to reach them with Words He has spoken through Ezekiel, now He is telling Ezekiel to do something that they can see with physical eyes.

The thing God has Ezekiel to do is to show them, in the physical, what will happen. It is an example for them. He says pack all your things, and stack them outside your house, in the daylight, so they can see. It appears, that Ezekiel would just carry with him the things he could move quickly with. Perhaps, just the things he could carry on his back. He will move to another dwelling.

Ezekiel 12:4 "Then shalt thou bring forth thy stuff by day in their sight, as stuff for removing: and thou shalt go forth at even in their sight, as they that go forth into captivity."

This is a visual message of God to them, about going into a strange land of captivity.

Ezekiel 12:5 "Dig thou through the wall in their sight, and carry out thereby."

Ezekiel was not to go out the door. His digging through the wall indicates an escape.

This also depicts those in desperation trying to escape from the sun dried brick homes.

Ezekiel 12:6 "In their sight shalt thou bear [it] upon [thy] shoulders, [and] carry [it] forth in the twilight: thou shalt cover thy face, that thou see not the ground: for I have set thee [for] a sign unto the house of Israel."

“Cover thy face”: This was to avoid recognition.

Ezekiel 12:7 "And I did so as I was commanded: I brought forth my stuff by day, as stuff for captivity, and in the even I digged through the wall with mine hand; I brought [it] forth in the twilight, [and] I bare [it] upon [my] shoulder in their sight."

“Dig through the wall ... in the twilight”: This indicates escape by night. This prophetic sign anticipates king Zedekiah’s nighttime attempted escape. Blinded by his captors, Zedekiah did not see the ground when brought to Babylon where he later died.

This shows the obedience of Ezekiel. He did everything, just as God had commanded him to do.

Ezekiel 12:8 "And in the morning came the word of the LORD unto me, saying,"

He moved during the night, and this is, perhaps, the very next morning.

Ezekiel 12:9 "Son of man, hath not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said unto thee, What doest thou?"

God asks Ezekiel if this sight lesson had caused the house of Israel to take notice and ask why this is done.

At this point, God has sent them message after message, in all sorts of ways. They are so rebellious, they might not have even taken heed of this. Obviously, the answer was no as nothing has been recorded about this. Seems no one is listening or paying any attention to Ezekiel now.

Ezekiel 12:10 "Say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; This burden [concerneth] the prince in Jerusalem, and all the house of Israel that [are] among them."

This is a reference to king Zedekiah, who was always referred to by Ezekiel as prince, never king. Jehoiachin was regarded as the true king because the Babylonians never deposed him formally. All the house of Israel however, shared the calamity to fall on Zedekiah.

How literally these prophecies were fulfilled can be seen from the account (in 2 Kings 25:1-7).

Ezekiel 12:11 "Say, I [am] your sign: like as I have done, so shall it be done unto them: they shall remove [and] go into captivity."

The things that had happened to Ezekiel, in front of them, was a sign of what would happen to Zedekiah and the Israelites with him. They would be led away captive.

Ezekiel 12:12 "And the prince that [is] among them shall bear upon [his] shoulder in the twilight, and shall go forth: they shall dig through the wall to carry out thereby: he shall cover his face, that he see not the ground with [his] eyes."

He definitely cannot see the ground with his eyes, because they blinded him, before they left for captivity with him. He will be shown no special privileges, even though he was Nebuchadnezzar's uncle. His sons had been killed before him, and then, his eyes had been put out. He will even carry his own belongings on his own shoulders. They had tried to escape by a hole in the wall.

Ezekiel 12:13 "My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare: and I will bring him to Babylon [to] the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there."

The net and snare were the Babylonian army. He was taken captive to Babylon, but he never saw it because his eyes had been put out at Riblah.

We see his attempt at escape did not work. He, with his men were caught. Zedekiah dies during his captivity in Babylon. He was caught up in the captivity, just like those Israelites under him. In the captivity, no special favors were shown to those who had a high rank.

Ezekiel 12:14 "And I will scatter toward every wind all that [are] about him to help him, and all his bands; and I will draw out the sword after them."

The capture of Zedekiah would cause his followers to scatter. They would be afraid and run, when their ruler is taken.

Ezekiel 12:15 "And they shall know that I [am] the LORD, when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries."

God's hand was to be with the enemy as His rod of correction, with only a few left.

Now we see the purpose in this. God will prove to them that He is God. Their false gods will not be able to help them against God. It is God that scatters them, even though, the physical enemy is Babylon. God is using Nebuchadnezzar to carry out His punishment on them.

Ezekiel 12:16 "But I will leave a few men of them from the sword, from the famine, and from the pestilence; that they may declare all their abominations among the heathen whither they come; and they shall know that I [am] the LORD."

The few who are spared, will admit the abominations they had been involved in. The heathen will even know why this terrible siege has come upon God's people. There will be no doubt left, who is God.

Ezekiel 12:17 "Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying,"

There seemed to be a passage of time between the other statement and the one beginning here. Moreover, shows it to be a continuation of the last statement though.

Ezekiel 12:18 "Son of man, eat thy bread with quaking, and drink thy water with trembling and with carefulness;"

This introduces the second sign in the chapter. Ezekiel was to tremble as he ate and drank, as a sign of the terror that would grip the nation back in Judah.

Bread will be extremely short and the quaking would be from weakness as well as fear. Even good clean water will be extremely short during this time. We know that the famine will be so great, that many will starve to death. Not only had the war kept them from producing food, but the natural elements did not cooperate with them either.

God has spoken this terror, and it is so. The carefulness spoken of would be to make sure there was enough food left for another day. Remember, Ezekiel is giving them an example of what will come on them. They had not heeded the warnings. Now this, along with the warnings, was to make them listen and take heed.

Ezekiel 12:19 "And say unto the people of the land, Thus saith the Lord GOD of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, [and] of the land of Israel; They shall eat their bread with carefulness, and drink their water with astonishment, that her land may be desolate from all that is therein, because of the violence of all them that dwell therein."

When the people ask Ezekiel, why is he doing this? He is to answer them in this way. They had brought this on themselves by their evil lifestyle. The word "all" lets us know that the sin was widespread, not to just a few.

Ezekiel 12:20 "And the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall be desolate; and ye shall know that I [am] the LORD."

They surely cannot say that God did not warn them. He has told them over and over. Not only did He speak to them in words, but He showed them an example through Ezekiel. It seems so strange for the man of God to have to go through all of this. He must experience this, so he can truly understand what they are going through.

Ezekiel 12:21 "And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,"

Again, there is another break here to show that God is speaking to Ezekiel another time.

Ezekiel 12:22 "Son of man, what [is] that proverb [that] ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth?"

The visions that fail are the visions of the false prophets. It seems a great deal of time took place, even after the immediate attack on Judah, before Jerusalem was destroyed. The people in captivity, as well as those in Judah, did not believe God would destroy Jerusalem. "The days are prolonged": The sad thing is, about 70 years will pass before they will go back into the land. The people did not want to trust Ezekiel's vision, because it was bringing bad news. They wanted to believe the false prophets with their failed visions who said they would be back in Jerusalem within 2 years.

Ezekiel 12:23 "Tell them therefore, Thus saith the Lord GOD; 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 effect of every vision."

Ezekiel must tell them that the time for waiting is up. The taking of the land is now. There will be no need for any more warnings.

Delay had given the people the false impression that the stroke of judgment would never come. In fact, a saying had become popular, no doubt developed by false prophets who caused the people to reject Ezekiel's visions and prophecies and gave false divinations.

The true prophet of God will generally see the fulfillment of his prophecy. In this case, it is very near (speaking of Ezekiel's)

Ezekiel 12:24 "For there shall be no more any vain vision nor flattering divination within the house of Israel."

This divination is like fortune telling. It is speaking of the false prophecy that was given. God will stop the mouths of these false prophets. Generally, the way He stops them, is with death.

Ezekiel 12:25 "For I [am] the LORD: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more prolonged: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord GOD."

He not only stops the mouth of the false prophet, but He speaks the truth to them through Ezekiel. His prophecies come true, because the prophecy is from God. Now, He has set a definite

time. This will take place in the lifetime of those He is speaking to. He again, reminds them of their rebellion toward Him. When God says it, it happens.

Ezekiel 12:26 "Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying,"

This means there was an interval of time between the last statement and this to Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 12:27 "Son 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 the times [that are] far off."

God stresses to Ezekiel the error in them thinking this prophecy is for sometime far in the future. They thought this would happen to some future generation, surely not to theirs.

One can not help but think of the words written in the book of Revelation about the time which is coming at this point. How many treat that book and those prophecies written there as something which is still a long way off or may never happen?

Ezekiel 12:28 "Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; There shall none of my words be prolonged any more, but the word which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord GOD."

Because they have believed this way, God says the time is now.

At least in the last few verses, they have realized that Ezekiel is a true prophet. They just believed his prophecy was for the far distant future. God sets them straight. The time is now. The reason God had waited as long as He did is in the next Scripture.

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

There comes a time when He will wait no longer. That time is here, for them. God is not a man that He should lie. Whatever He says, will be.

Ezekiel Chapter 12 Questions

1. What is different about this Word from the Word in the previous chapter?
2. What does God call Ezekiel in verse 2?
3. Who does he dwell in the midst of?
4. Who was the rebellion against?
5. Why was it necessary to give them this message again?

6. What did the Lord tell Ezekiel to do in verse 3?
7. Why is he doing this?
8. What would Ezekiel move?
9. The digging in the wall indicates an _____.
10. Why was his face covered when he moved?
11. What is the house of Israel called in verse 9?
12. Who is the prince in verse 10?
13. In what condition is Zedekiah carried to Babylon?
14. What is "burden" in verse 10, speaking of?
15. Why did Ezekiel speak of Zedekiah as a prince?
16. Who was Zedekiah related to?
17. Zedekiah dies in _____.
18. Where does God scatter them?
19. What do the few who are left do?
20. Ezekiel was to eat the bread with _____.
21. He was to drink water with _____ and with _____.
22. Which visions fail?
23. What is the divination in verse 24?
24. What will God do to the false prophets?
25. What does God stress in verse 27?
26. What is one thing they finally decided about Ezekiel's prophecies?