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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Ezekiel 24.

(2014)

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But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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Ezekiel 24.

Topics.

- The king of Babylon destroys Jerusalem.
- The LORD tells Ezekiel to speak a parable to Jerusalem.
- Woe to the bloody city.
- Ezekiel's wife dies and Ezekiel shows no grief for her.
- Ezekiel is a sign to the people.

Introduction to the Book of Ezekiel: Ezekiel, a prophet and priest, was exiled to Babylon in 597 B.C. His ministry extended over at least twenty-three years. The book opens with his first dramatic vision of the "likeness" of the LORD". Ezekiel was keenly aware of God's presence and power in human affairs. He addressed both the exiles and the people left in Judah with messages of warning and judgment, predicting the fall of Jerusalem.

After its fall (586), Ezekiel prophesied of hope and reassurance for the people of Judah, who had then lost the focus of God's covenant and the temple in Jerusalem. His vision of the valley of dry bones (ch. 37) is a classic picture of God's ability to breathe new life into those who are spiritually dead. Ezekiel is prophesying about the Jews that did not go into captivity to Babylon, but remained against the word of the LORD in Jerusalem.

NOTE: Ezekiel's message is primarily directed to the people in the land of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem (the two tribes), but often it is difficult to separate the message from Judah and Israel (the ten tribes) because much of what the LORD says can be applied to both Judah and Israel because the two are so intertwined and both nations were guilty of the same gross sins.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

JERUSALEM IS LAID WASTE.

Ezekiel and the people of influence from Jerusalem have been in captivity to Babylon nine years.

The King of Babylon Destroys Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 24:1-2 ----- ¹In the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: ²"Son of man, write down the name of this day, this very day. The king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day.

How fantastic is this Ezekiel is in Babylon, so he would have no idea of what was happening at Jerusalem (no mobile phones in those days) so the LORD tells Him. On this very day Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon with his armies have entered the city of Jerusalem (imagine having God telling you the most up to date news).

The LORD tells Ezekiel to Speak a Parable to Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 24:3-5 ----- ³And utter a parable to the rebellious house and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: "Set on the pot, set it on; pour in water also; ⁴put in it the pieces of meat, all the good pieces, the thigh and the shoulder; fill it with choice bones. ⁵Take the choicest one of the flock; pile the logs under it; boil it well; seethe also its bones in it.

The pot: refers to the city of Jerusalem.

Pour water in the pot: means prepare the city of Jerusalem ready for destruction.

Put in it the pieces of meat: refers to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

All the good pieces, the thigh, the shoulder and the choice bones: refers to the king's officials, the prophets and priests of Jerusalem.

Take the choicest one of the flock: refers to Zedekiah the king of Jerusalem.

Pile the logs under it and boil it well: refers to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon his fierce armies and the associated nations.

The parable: Jerusalem is pictured as a cooking pot, and the inhabitants of the city the meat to be cooked in it. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and his armies are the firewood that brings the pot to boiling point cooking everything in the pot (making it eatable i.e. acceptable).

The history: the fierce armies of Nebuchadnezzar burned the city of Jerusalem, slaughtered the people, pillaged the LORD'S temple, killed Zedekiah the king of Jerusalem's sons in front of his eyes, then blinded him and led him and all the surviving people of Jerusalem in chains to Babylon for seventy years. At the end of the seventy years they were fully cooked, Judah and Israel triumphantly returned to Jerusalem with great rejoicing as one united nation faithful to the LORD their God and never again turned to idols or other gods.

Woe to the Bloody City.

Ezekiel 24:6-8 ----- ⁶Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose corrosion is in it, and whose corrosion has not gone out of it! Take out of it piece after piece, without making any choice. ⁷For the blood she has shed is in her midst; she put it on the bare rock; she did not pour it out on the ground to cover it with dust. ⁸To rouse my wrath, to take vengeance, I have set on the bare rock the blood she has shed, that it may not be covered.

Corrosion: refers to all the sins, abominations and idol worship of Jerusalem.

Take out of it piece after piece, without making any choice: means destroy everyone, don't show any favouritism.

The blood Jerusalem shed in her city on the bare rock: refers to the priests not draining the blood from the animal being sacrificed on the altar and covering it with earth and the slaughtering of their children to Molech.

The LORD has set on the bare rock the blood Jerusalem has shed, that it may not be covered: means there will be no-one to bury the dead bodies of those who are slaughtered in Jerusalem by the armies of Babylon.

Woe to the Bloody City.

Ezekiel 24:9-14 ----- ⁹Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Woe to the bloody city! I also will make the pile great. ¹⁰Heap on the logs, kindle the fire, boil the meat well, mix in the spices, and let the bones be burned up. ¹¹Then set it empty upon the coals, that it may become hot, and its copper may burn, that its uncleanness may be melted in it, its corrosion consumed. ¹²She has wearied herself with toil; its abundant corrosion does not go out of it. Into the fire with its corrosion! ¹³On account of your unclean lewdness, because I would have cleansed you and you were not cleansed from your uncleanness, you shall not be cleansed anymore till I have satisfied my fury upon you. ¹⁴I am the LORD. I have spoken; it shall come to pass; I will do it. I will not go back; I will not spare; I will not relent; according to your ways and your deeds you will be judged, declares the Lord GOD."

NOTICE: the underlying motivation of the LORD for heating up the fire is to cleanse His people from their gross and extreme wickedness. Without God's judgment Israel's sins would have simply increased in their idol worship.

Their cruelty to others and their child sacrifices, their perverting of justice for their own gain (so they could take the land and homes from the less fortunate) and the oppression of the poor to make greater profits.

Ezekiel's Wife Dies.

Ezekiel 24:15-18 ----- ¹⁵The word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁶"Son of man, behold, I am about to take the delight of your eyes away from you (his wife) at a stroke; yet you shall not mourn or weep, nor shall your tears run down. ¹⁷Sigh, but not aloud; make no mourning for the dead. Bind on your turban, and put your shoes on your feet; do not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of men." ¹⁸So I spoke to the people in the morning, and at evening my wife died. And on the next morning I did as I was commanded.

The delight of your eyes: refers to Ezekiel's wife.

I am about to take the delight of your eyes away: means Ezekiel's wife is about to die. The LORD tells Ezekiel when his wife dies he is not to weep and let tears run down his face, which would obviously be his natural response to the death of his wife.

Bind on your turban, and put your shoes on your feet: means even though Ezekiel maybe feeling grief, he is not to show it outwardly.

Do not cover your lips: usually when a person puts their hand up to their mouth it is because they have seen something that shocked them, even though Ezekiel is horrified at the news he is not to outwardly show it.

Do not eat the bread of men: means do not be grieved and sorrowful as others would be.

Ponder for a moment: how Ezekiel would be feeling, the LORD comes to him at night and tells him his wife who is the delight of his life is going to die and when she does he is not to show any grief. He gets up the next morning knowing his wife is about to die and cannot show any outward expression of grief, then that very night she dies. Ezekiel's faith is so strong in the LORD that the following morning he obeyed all the words of the LORD and put on his turban, sandals and hid his grief from the people of Israel.

NOTE: this is not teaching that grieving over a loved one is a wrong response. Throughout the book of Ezekiel the LORD often uses dramatic actions in Ezekiel's life as signs to: -

- Get the attention of Israel.
- Depict the condition of the entire nation of Israel.
- Picture future events that are about to come upon Israel.

In this instance it is a picture the horror and death that has taken place in Jerusalem, and to get the attention of the people of Israel that are in captivity with Ezekiel, which is exactly what it does as they come and ask him why is he not showing grief over the death of his loved wife. Ezekiel in this context is a symbol of God who loved Jerusalem and its inhabitants (His wife).

Ezekiel Shows no Grief for the Death of His Wife.

Ezekiel 24:19 ----- ¹⁹And the people said to me, "Will you not tell us what these things mean for us, that you are acting thus?"

The Israelites ask Ezekiel why he is showing no grief for the death of his wife.

Ezekiel 24:20-23 ----- ²⁰Then I said to them, "The word of the LORD came to me: ²¹Say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the pride of your power, the delight of your eyes, and the yearning of your soul, and your sons and your daughters whom you left behind shall fall by the sword. ²²And you shall do as I have done; you shall

not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of men. ²³Your turbans shall be on your heads and your shoes on your feet; you shall not mourn or weep, but you shall rot away in your iniquities and groan to one another.

Ezekiel is told to tell the people of Israel the LORD will: -

- Profane His sanctuary (Babylonian soldiers entered it and took the silver gold and the holy and sacred items back to Babylon).
- Destroy their sons and daughters who stayed behind.

NOTE: those that stayed behind rebelled against the LORD'S prophets and the word of the LORD, Ezekiel tells those with him they are not to show or express any signs of outward grief, but go about their daily life as normal as he is doing.

You shall rot away in your iniquities: means inwardly they would be devastated their beloved city is destroyed and their sons and daughters slaughtered or taken prisoner. They would recall the covenant they made with the LORD which stated if they turn to other gods, pervert justice, oppress the poor and turn from God all these things would come upon them and in remembering this their hearts would be groaning (rotting) because of all their iniquities which had brought all this horror upon them and upon their beloved city and their sons and daughters.

The meaning of groan: Ezekiel tells the people they are to groan to one another, in this context groan means grieving inwardly it is applied to emotional turmoil but not expressing it outwardly it carries the idea of inward emotional pain, grief and sorrow that is not expressed outwardly. In the previous verses the LORD told Israel they were not to outwardly express any sign of sorrow, sadness or grief, then in verse twenty-seven God tells them they can open their mouths and speak they do not need to be mute any longer (i.e. keep their grief silent, unseen and hidden) they can now outwardly express their emotions of sorrow to each other.

Ezekiel a Sign to the People.

Ezekiel 24:24-27 ----- ²⁴Thus shall Ezekiel be to you a sign; according to all that he has done you shall do. When this comes, then you will know that I am the Lord GOD.' ²⁵"As for you, son of man, surely on the day when I take from them (those at Jerusalem) their stronghold (Jerusalem), their joy and glory, the delight of their eyes and their soul's desire, and also their sons and daughters, ²⁶on that day a fugitive will come to you to report to you the news. ²⁷On that day your mouth will be opened to the fugitive, and you shall speak and be no longer mute. So you will be a sign to them, and they will know that I am the LORD."

After all these events take place the people will know that Ezekiel has been a sign and they will know that the LORD is their God.

You shall speak and be no longer mute: means survivors from the destruction of Jerusalem will be brought as captives into Babylon, when they arrive Ezekiel and the people that are with him are no longer need to keep their grief silent, they can now wail, weep and shed tears of sorrow over the destruction of their beloved city and the death of their sons and daughters.

You will be a sign to them, and they will know that I am the LORD: when the survivors arrive and meet those previously taken into Babylonian captivity (the people of influence) and see them weeping for them, they will know that they have compassion toward them, that everything Ezekiel spoke was from the LORD and that the LORD is their God. Even today the city of Jerusalem is the joy, glory and delight of every Israelites heart and their soul's desire (Ezekiel 24:25).

End.