

## EZEKIEL CHAPTER 24: THREE CRUCIAL DAYS \*

Class Outline—Large Print Edition

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### I. Introduction

- A. Location—Ezek is in Babylon but continues to prophesy against JS (JS=Jerusalem)
- B. Time frame
  - 1. First exile: 605 B.C. (Daniel)
  - 2. Second exile: 597 B.C. (Jehoiachin and Ezekiel)
  - 3. Third exile, destruction of JS: 586 B.C.
- C. Structure
  - 1. Two oracles
    - a. Siege of JS (vss. 1-14)
    - b. Death of Ezek's wife and interpretation (15-27)
  - 2. \* Three crucial days (*as per Leslie Allen*)
    - a. The day of the siege of JS (vs. 2)
    - b. The day of the death of Ezek's wife (vs. 18)
    - c. The day of notification of the fall of JS to the exiles in Babylon (vs. 26)

### II. Commentary

- A. FIRST ORACLE—The Siege of JS (1-14)
  - 1. Intro: "The word of the Lord came to me." Usual formulation
    - a. Chap. 24 is the end of a series of messages beginning w/ chapter 13.

- b. The date is very specific and follows 2 Kgs 25.1:  
*ninth year, tenth month, tenth of the month* (5 January 588 B.C.)
2. EZEKIEL'S FIRST DAY: The Lord asks Ezek to write down the exact date on which Nebuchadnezzar begins his siege of JS
- a. Why such a specific date? What's the purpose?
  - b. Completely eliminates exiles' hope of return to JS. Others do not know what the date is until the fugitive from JS arrives in Babylon later, but Ezek's writing down the date shows he's a prophet of the Lord.
  - c. Zech 8.19: This day was mourned, but it will become a day of jubilation as people remember it but see how the Lord has restored the fortunes of JS.
3. Begins the parable of the pot/caldron
- a. Parable (*mashal*)
    - i. Last of Ezek's parables
    - ii. Reuse of pot image from Ezek 11.3-12.
      - (1) Note 11.3: "This city is the pot and we are the meat" (Cf. 11.7, 11).
    - i. The Lord is using an image where the words of the proud elders are used against them. Following up on chapter 11, those left behind from the 597 exile were thinking of themselves superior to those that went into exile. They

rebuilt their houses and now have a sense of superiority over those that left. The latter [exiles] were the riffraff.

ii. “Pot”: same word used in Jer 1.13-14:

The word of the Lord came to me [Jeremiah] a second time, saying, “What do you see?” And I said, “I see a boiling pot, facing away from the north.” [Lit. “Its face is from the face of the north.”] Then the Lord said to me, “Out of the north disaster shall be let loose upon all the inhabitants of the land.

Question: Babylon is east of Judah (about 850 miles). Why in the vision is the pot from the north?

- b. Use of “rebellious house” (*bêt-hammeriy*); used only in Ezek (14 times)
  - c. This is a copper/bronze pot (cf. vs. 11)
  - d. Note the caldron was used for sacrifices: Lev 8.31; Num 6.19; 1 Sam 2.14
4. “Thigh” and “shoulder”: include water (vs. 3)
- a. These pieces used for sacrifices (cf. 3.d above)
  - b. Use “good” pieces and include choice bones. I.e., the VIPs.

5. “Choice of the flocks”—the presumed “good” people that had remained since 597.
  - a. Probably “wood” rather than “bones” to be put under the pot.
    - i. “Boil vigorously”: similar to the boiling pot of Jer 1.3-4
    - ii. (There is some similarity in the words. Bones (‘*ăṣāmîm*) instead of wood (‘*ēṣîm*).” Copyist error for bones.
    - iii. If “wood,” then this is an image for Nebuchadnezzar’s siege engines.
6. “Woe to the bloody city”
  - a. “Bloody city” used here and vs. 9 and 22.2. Used for Nineveh (3.1).
  - b. The “pot” is clearly JS. The contents are its citizens
  - c. Taking the pieces out randomly (Lit. “without [casting a] lot.” The inhabitants will die randomly without reference to class or social standing.
  - d. The reference to “lots” may imply that those taken in the first exile (597) were chosen by lot. Here, everyone will be taken.
  - e. The word for “rot” or “rust” appears only five times in the OT and all are in this chapter. Perhaps a better translation is “*deposit*.” I.e., what is left after cooking and the water boils off. (A note on heating copper/bronze.)
7. Bare rock analogy

- a. The bloodshed is open to all to see and not atoned for. Note that the blood of animals needed to be poured on the ground; Lev 17.13; Deut 12.16).
  - b. “Bare rock” may refer to the lack of shame for their sins (cf. Is 3.9).
  - c. Job 16.18: “Earth, do not cover my blood, and may there be no resting place for my cry.”
8. The sin is clearly visible;
- a. God sees it, and he will judge it.
  - b. The blood will not be covered. It will cry out for vengeance. (Gen 4.10: Abel’s blood cried out.)
9. More pronouncement of woe to the “bloody city.”
- a. God takes over as cook.
  - b. “Make the pile great”
    - i. Pile of wood
    - ii. Pile of bodies
10. Overcooking the stew
- a. Heap on the wood, kindle the fire. Note Ezek 22.20: “As one gathers silver and bronze and iron and lead and tin into a furnace, to blow the fire on it in order to melt it, so I will gather you in my anger and in my wrath, and I will put you in and melt you.” [ESV]
  - b. Addition of spices. Normally used as a preservative.
    - i. What does it mean here? Does it fit?
    - ii. LXX does not have this phrase
11. Time to clean the dirty pot

- a. It appears from vs. 10 that all the material has been boiled off.
- b. Now the pot will be fired red-hot. Implies after the people are killed, the city will be burned to purify it.
- c. The pot may have started out clean (why would one use a dirty pot), but the cooking process polluted the pot [scum], just as the elites polluted JS.
- d. The scum remaining will be eliminated by high heat as in a self-cleaning oven.

12. “Wearied me w/ toil”

- a. Attempt to gain God’s favor w/ works, but the works are filthy
- b. Difficult Hebrew. See the iii below:
- c. Part of the problem w/ the translation given in English as “She has wearied [me/herself] w/ her toil.” [Just two words in Hebrew.]
  - i. The word for “toil” appears only here.
  - ii. The verb for “wearied” lacks an object [e.g., “me” or “herself.”]
  - iii. Some translate this as “
    - (1) “It has frustrated every effort” (HCSB).
    - (2) “It has tried my patience” (NET).
    - (3) “She has grown weary w/ lies” (NKJV).
    - (4) “It has frustrated all efforts (NIV).
  - iv. LXX omits this clause.

- d. Whatever, the idea is that everything JS has done, it will not clean the filthy deposit in the pot. Only extreme fire will do that.

### 13. Lewdness

- a. Fulfills the image of vs. 12 as to what will happen to JS.
- b. For “lewdness,” cf. chaps. 16 & 23.
- c. Even after the first exile of 597, the people did not learn from this and continued in their lewd ways.

### 14. That’s it!

- a. Sums up everything the Lord has said up to now in this chapter and in the entire book. And now the end is even nearer than ever since Nebuchadnezzar has laid siege to JS.
- b. Measure for measure punishment
- c. Judged according to deeds. Cf. Rev 20.12:

“And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.”

### 15. SECOND ORACLE—Ezekiel's wife dies

### 16. No show of emotion

- a. Ezekiel's wife to be taken, yet Ezek is not to mourn, but he can groan inwardly.
- b. The word for “*delight of your eyes*” is the same word used in Song 5.16 for the woman’s husband/lover.
- c. The word can also be used for precious people and precious things.
- d. Ezek will grieve inwardly for the loss of his wife just as God has grieved for the fate of JS.

17. Do not ...

- a. Difficult Hebrew, but the best interpretation is that Ezek may groan, but silently.
- b. Don’t put on clothes of mourning nor eat a meal of mourning. There seems to have been something like “mourner’s bread” (Hos 9.4). “Bread of mourners” can also be “bread of despair” [According to L. Allen].
- c. Taking off headgear and putting dust on one’s head was a sign of mourning (Josh 7.6 after the defeat at Ai); 1 Sam 4.12 (taking of the ark).
- d. “Shoes [sandals] on feet”: To take them off is a sign of mourning (2 Sam 15.30: David escaping JS). But David had his head *covered*, so maybe this is a different kind of head covering that does not represent grief.
- e. “Cover the mustache” or cover the lips—also a sign of mourning.

- f. But in keeping w/ vs. 22, some outward expression will be seen for there to be a parallel between Ezek's wife and the demise of JS.

#### 18. THE SECOND DAY OF EZEKIEL

- a. "Spoke to the people in the morning = more message of doom, or did he tell them what the Lord was about to do? I.e., take his wife.
- b. His wife dies in the evening and in the [next] morning he does as the Lord commanded him.
- c. Perhaps this rough lesson was what was necessary since the people were not paying attention to his "street theatre."
- d. Are you troubled by this?

19. Note that Ezek has grabbed the attention of the people.

20. Ezek begins to relate what the Lord told him.

21. Ezek relays the meaning: The *delight* of the people, the sanctuary, will be destroyed—like Ezekiel's wife—and their sons and daughter will be killed as well.

22. The people will not mourn, nor feast, nor wear clothes of mourning just like Ezek.

- a. Why not? Will they just be trying to stay alive?
- b. This is such a horrendous event that no public mourning can express how disastrous this is.
- c. The death of the people during the siege and the fall of JS is like a capital punishment for which mourning is inappropriate.

23. Similar to v. 22 w/ addition of mourning to one another. “Rot away in impurities” = cleansing the rot off the pot.
24. The Lord explains thru Ezek what it all means:
- The people will experience all the pathos of Ezek;
  - Then they will know “I am the Lord.”
  - Note the speaking in the third person. The only other place Ezek’s name is mentioned is in 1.3.
25. Beginning of what will happen after the downfall of JS as per the prediction
- The desire of their eyes and their heart’s delight (temple) will be taken away
  - They will lose their sons and their daughters
  - They will know “I am the Lord.”
26. THE THIRD DAY OF EZEKIEL.
- On the day of destruction one who escapes will eventually reach Babylon to relate the awful news
  - Ezek 33.21: “On the fifth of the tenth month [two years, five months later)], a survivor [fugitive] from Jerusalem came to me, saying, ‘The city has been taken.’”
  - That evening Ezek’s mouth was opened (33.22) as per vs. 27.
27. Ezekiel will no longer be mute (cf. 3.26)
- Has Ezek been mute all this time, or in connection w/ previous commands not to speak to the elders

that came to Ezek (20.3, 31)? Appears to be the former.

- b. From this point on, Ezek gives messages of hope that were not present up to this point (for the most part).
- c. Ezek will now speak of foreign nations chaps. 25-32 before taking up hopeful messages for his people.
- d. Now w/ the fall of JS, hopefully the people will concentrate on doing what is right and not on their selfish desires.

### LESSONS

- A. God's judgement is coming—eventually.
  - 1. Ezekiel told the inhabitants of Judah and of Jerusalem that God will judge their actions, but they blew him off.
  - 2. Yet in 586 B.C. JS fell, and that is a symbol to us on ultimate destruction of this world
  - 3. Scoffers exist today just as in Ezekiel's time.

### 2 Pet 3.3-4 (MSG)

First off, you need to know that in the last days, mockers are going to have a heyday. Reducing everything to the level of their petty feelings, they'll mock, "So what's

happened to the promise of his Coming? Our ancestors are dead and buried, and everything's going on just as it has from the first day of creation. Nothing's changed.

4. But the Lord will come as a "thief in the nite" (2 Pet 3.10), and the heavens and the earth will be destroyed just as was Jerusalem. But we will be saved "through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth" (2 Thess 2.13).j

B. Just as the inhabitants of Judah and of Jerusalem deserved judgement (24.13, 14), so the ultimate judgement of God will be just and those judged will deserve it, for

Will not the judge of all the earth do right (Gen 18.25)?

They refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore, God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth

but had pleasure in unrighteousness (2 Thess 2.10b-12).

For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries (Heb 10.26-27).

C. In light of the coming judgement, how then should we live?

1. We may suffer loss just as Ezek suffered loss—even loss of that most dear to our hearts
2. Note Paul's advice in 1 Cor 7.29-31:

This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not

mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

AND

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain  
(1 Cor 15.58)

#### D. Remember Jesus

1. God did not spare his own son. The Father lost something extremely dear to him when he had to pour his wrath on his Son.
2. But Good Friday led to Easter Morning.
3. And we, too, like Jesus will rise to be w/ him forever.

MAY THIS BE AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO ALL!