

# THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

GBC EQUIPPING HOUR | JANUARY 19, 2020



## Class 4 – Four Signs of Coming Judgment (4:1-5:17)

**PURPOSE:** To relate to the early Jews in Exile -leaving their glory days, entering into hostile territory, always looking ahead to the Kingdom of Redemption.

### Introduction

“There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. <sup>20</sup> And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, <sup>21</sup> who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. <sup>22</sup> The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, <sup>23</sup> and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. <sup>24</sup> And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ <sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. <sup>26</sup> And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’ <sup>27</sup> And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house— <sup>28</sup> for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ <sup>29</sup> But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ <sup>30</sup> And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ <sup>31</sup> He said to him, **‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’**”

(Luke 16:19-31)

## I. **Sign 1: The Black Iron Face of God** (Ezekiel 4:1-3)

Needed supplies: 1 brick, several wood pieces, 1 chiseling knife, 1 large iron skillet.

### A. Initial Impression: The Sum of All Fears

The early Jews were well acquainted with siege works since their country was at the crossroads of nearby warring empires... what they were not prepared for: one of their own priests inscribing the name “Jerusalem” on a symbolic brick representing them.

### B. The Hard Skillet Facing the Holy Land

This is just *the opposite* of Numbers 6:24-26 which says,  
  
The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

## II. **Sign 2: National Paralysis** (Ezekiel 4:4-8)

Needed supplies: normal camping equipment (but for a long stay!), several strands of chord or rope, ground stakes, same brick from Sign 1 above.

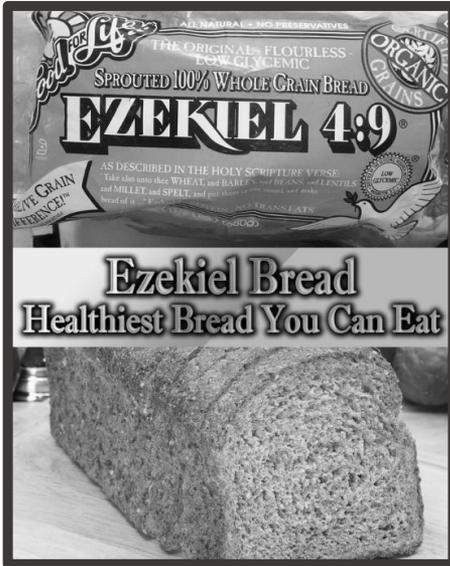
### A. Connecting the Dots: God is the One Making the Siege

For the prophet/priest of Judah to speak against the city while the mock-siege was being played out clearly meant this attack couldn't be merely happenstance. In fact, the Babylonian (and Assyrian) raid was by divine orders.

### B. No Where to Run, No Where to Hide

This kind of psychological warfare where the raiding army cuts off all incoming supplies leaves the targeted city facing a slow death on the inside. The chords fastened over Ezekiel (or on the brick) showed the painful inertia of being stuck, as it were, in stocks.

### III. Sign 3: Dung Meal (Ezekiel 4:9-17)



Note: this is missing the point.

Needed supplies: wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, emmer (cereal plant), about half a ton of cow dung, a very limited supply of water, 1 small drinking jar, (also use iron skillet -the one from Sign 1 above will probably do).

#### A. Human Excrement for Cooking Fuel

God's initial instruction to Ezekiel to use human excrement for cooking fuel indicated that those meager daily meals would yet be an occasion of self-defilement. At the climax of the mounting siege parents would be forced to cannibalize their own dying offspring (cf. 5:10).

#### B. "How Could God Do This?"

Similar to the time of Noah, this was not a kneejerk reactionary judgment by God. Just as the cities around Noah were beforehand *long known* for violence, so idolatrous Israel was *long known* for sacrificing their own children to Molech (see Ps. 106:35-43 appropriate for this 47<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Roe v. Wade).

#### IV. **Sign 4: Systematic Slaughter** (Ezekiel 5:1-17)

Needed supplies: 1 sharp blade, 1 balance scale, lighter fluid.

##### A. Judgment on the Inside, to the Outside, and Beyond..

For God to chase after not only the captured, but the escapees as well, is a sure sign of how serious God views ongoing rebellion. Nothing escapes him.

##### B. Hint of a Small Surviving Remnant in Ezekiel 5:3

Sometimes when you read the Apostle Paul's letters, he sounds like the surviving church is a small floating raft in a big sea of charlatans, skeptics, and immoral types. John writes in Revelation 22:11, "let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy" –like bifurcating conveyor belts running to two ultimate ends. Appropriate for today?

#### **The Book of Ezekiel Course Outline:**

- Introduction to Ezekiel
- Ezekiel's Close Encounter (1:1-28)
- Ezekiel's Strange Commissioning (2:1-3:27)
- Four Signs of Coming Judgment (4:1-5:17)
- Two Messages of Coming Judgment (6:1-7:27)
- Idolatry in the House (8:1-18)
- God's Glory Departs (9:1-11:23)
- Straight Talk to the Covenant People (12:1-19:14)
- Defective Leadership (20:1-23:49)
- The Purge (24:1-27)
- Foreign Raiders Not Exempt (25:1-33:20)
- Reentering the Land on God's Terms (33:21-39:29)
- Restoration of Temple Worship (40:1-46:24)
- Restoration of the Land (47:1-48:35)