

THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

GBC EQUIPPING HOUR | MARCH 1, 2020



Class 10 – The Purge (24:1-27)

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: Babylonian Siege of 586 B.C.

In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month—that was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon—Nebuzaradan, the captain of the bodyguard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. ⁹ **And he burned the house of the LORD and the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem;** every great house he burned down. ¹⁰ And all the army of the Chaldeans, who were with the captain of the guard, **broke down the walls around Jerusalem.** ¹¹ And the rest of the people who were left in the city and the deserters who had deserted to the king of Babylon, together with the rest of the multitude, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried into exile. ¹² But the captain of the guard left some of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and plowmen. ¹³ **And the pillars of bronze that were in the house of the LORD, and the stands and the bronze sea that were in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans broke in pieces and carried the bronze to Babylon.** ¹⁴ And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the **chief priest** and Zephaniah the **second priest** and the **three keepers of the threshold;** ¹⁵ and from the city **he took an officer who had been in command of the men of war,** and **five men of the king's council** who were found in the city; and the **secretary of the commander of the army,** who mustered the people of the land; and **sixty men of the people** of the land, who were found in the city. ¹⁶ **And Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah.** ¹⁷ **And the king of Babylon struck them down and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was taken into exile out of its land.**

- 2 Kings 25:8-13, 18-21

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I. **A Boastful Saying Upturned...and Burned** (Ezek. 24:1-14)

A. Jerusalem's Boast: 'We're the Choicest Meat'

And he said to me, "Son of man, these are the men who devise iniquity and who give wicked counsel in this city; ³ **who say, 'The time is not near to build houses. This city is the cauldron, and we are the meat.'**" ⁴ Therefore prophesy against them; prophesy, O son of man."

-Ezekiel 11:2-3

The above **bold-type** saying could easily be the mantra of our modern times: 'Don't have big families' (i.e., having to build new homes that spread out from the confines of the elitist cities); instead 'join in the mosh pit of neo-pagan delights and, rev it up!'

Jerusalem, "the Holy city," had become a cauldron of fleshly indulgences ranging from child-sacrifice rituals (20:26), to sex with Dad's wife (22:10), to extortion (22:12). This was not a lifestyle. It was a *deathstyle*.

B. God's Poetic Justice: Cooking Instructions

1. Overcook the "meat" until charred (24:10).
2. Toss out the blackened meat & bone (24:6b-8).
3. Continue to heat the empty cauldron so hot that it glowingly starts to melt out all its impurities (24:6a, 11).

Lest we think God is being impulsively sadistic let us remember that God, up to this point, had been scorned and ignored for literally generations.

Important: when we sin we don't just sin against God's Law, we sin against God himself -his person. Thus, his holy revenge is warranted (Rom. 12:19). There is a general consensus among biblical scholars that after the siege, idolatry was (mostly) eradicated from Israel.

II. Ezekiel's Most Difficult Act (Ezek. 24:15-27)

A. Some Background

1. God is the giver and taker of life (Job 1:21).
2. God is not making an apples-to-apples comparison between Ezekiel / Wife and Jerusalem / Temple. Ezekiel *was not* disobedient like Jerusalem was, but his wife *was* a source of delight as *was* the sight of the Temple.
3. The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

-Deuteronomy 29:29

B. That Memorable Time of 'No Memorial'

1. Analogy #1: If a child gets a spanking (or "time out") for deliberately disobeying, and bewails it on and on, we don't call that "noble"; we call it "stubborn."
2. Analogy #2: If an axe murderer gets the electric chair, we typically don't proceed by putting on a big memorial service for him who was the *slayer of the victims*. We typically say, "good riddance." We reserve the moment of silence for *the victims*.
3. Analogy #3: After Aaron's sons treated the Tabernacle with disdain, and after they were slain by God, Aaron was not allowed to mourn for the loss of his sons (see Leviticus 10:1-7).
4. Likewise: If Israel is to be severely punished for a grievous list of wrongdoings, they forfeit the right to mourn their consequential condition. Their punishment, after all, was earned.

Conclusion

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: ¹⁰ “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ ¹³ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. **For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.**”

- Luke 18:9-14

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)
- Blind 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)