

EZEKIEL: BLOSSOMING DURING LIFE'S MOST SEVERE CRISES
Part IV: "God's Work To Make His Messengers' Testimonies Believable"
(Ezekiel 12:21-14:23)

I. Introduction

- A. In witnessing to unsaved friends and family, a believer often bears the challenge of not being BELIEVED! Various factors in the relationship leave the unsaved acquaintance resisting Christ.
- B. Ezekiel faced this challenge on several fronts, and the Lord ministered to encourage, direct and warn the respective parties involved.

II. God's Work To Fulfill His Word Through Messengers That Are Doubted, Ez. 12:21-14:23.

- A. As Ezekiel ministered to the captives in Babylon, his message about the impending destruction of the City of Jerusalem was received in unbelief, Ez. 12:21-22. The people noted that Ezekiel had ministered for some months without anything happening to Jerusalem; consequently, they made a proverb, saying, "The days are prolonged, and every (prophetic) vision fails (to be true in coming to pass)!"
- B. The **Lord** expressed anger at this response to Ezekiel's message, and responded with supplying Ezekiel with five messages on the certainty of His judgment on Jerusalem:
 - 1. God's First Response To Disbelief At His Messenger's Testimony - Though the people thought the long time span between Ezekiel's prediction and the judgment meant that Ezekiel predicted falsehood, God would actually **shorten** that timespan compared to the original plan! (Ez. 12:21-25)
 - 2. God's Second Response To Disbelief At His Messenger's Testimony - Though some people thought that Ezekiel spoke the truth, but that the judgment was so distant that they had nothing to fear, God came back with a warning of imminent judgment, Ez. 12:26-28.
 - 3. God's Third Response To Disbelief At His Messenger's Testimony - For causing misplaced hope to abound in Israel in the first place, the false prophets and prophetesses would have their messages exposed before the people for what they were--white-washed tales, Ez. 13:1-23.
 - a. The false prophets had followed their own desires and given messages in God's Name to settle the inhabitants of Jerusalem into a false complacency, 13:1-7.
 - b. For this error, God stated through Ezekiel that He was opposed to these false messengers; when the City of Jerusalem fell, the people would ridicule these messengers about their false hopes and cries of "Peace, Peace," when there was no real peace, Ez. 13:8-12,13-16.
 - c. God also gave a message against false prophetesses: the various kinds of divination cloths used by these women to make their predictions for money would be torn from them in the invasion, v. 17-23
 - 4. God's Fourth Response To Disbelief At His Messenger's Testimony - Even if people asked God's prophetic truth from His prophets, if they harbored idolatry in their hearts, instead of giving prophetic insight, God would make the prophet condemn the idolatry and not satisfy this curiosity, Ez. 14:1-11.
 - a. Some elders of the people came to Ezekiel seeking true prophetic insight on what would indeed happen to Jerusalem, Ez. 14:1.
 - b. However, God knew that these men were secretly idolaters, interested in prophecy only for curiosity's sake, Ez. 14:2-3.
 - c. Accordingly, God refused to let Ezekiel satisfy their curiosity, but address the need for repentance from the sin of idolatry that produced prophetic calls for judgment, Ez. 14:4-8. Any prophet who did go ahead and give "prophetic insight" to these elders indicated that he was a false prophet, 9-11!
 - 5. God's Fifth Response To Disbelief At His Messenger's Testimony - God indicated that His judgment was so inevitable that were there a godly few intercessors for Jerusalem (such as Noah, Daniel and Job), God would still judge Jerusalem in accord with Ezekiel's prophecy, Ez. 14:12-23.

Lesson: (1) *When people doubt our testimony because they haven't (a) seen God's judgment "yet," or (b) because false teachers water down our true witness, (c) or because hearers harbor idolatrous attitudes and are merely curious about our beliefs, (d) or because they trust that past mercies of God will clear the way for them to enter heaven, God Himself moves to make our witness believable!* (2) *God does not want us to worry about being believed, but merely be concerned about obeying Him in living and communicating His message when, where and how He dictates!*