

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Ezekiel: Effective Ministry To The Spiritually Rebellious

Part X: The Sign Of Ezekiel's Trembling: The Need To Reject Errant Messages To Heed God (Ezekiel 12:17-28)

I. Introduction

- A. People who are very rebellious toward God often hold to an errant belief about what is right and wrong because they have heeded an errant teacher with errant theology. Such blindness leads to a lack of concern over the directives and even warnings of Scripture or those who teach God's Word, a very dangerous state.
- B. To clarify the great need for sinners to reject errant messages and heed God's Word so as to repent of their sin, God had Ezekiel act out the sign of his trembling in Ezekiel 12:17-28. We view this event for our instruction:

II. The Sign Of Ezekiel's Trembling: The Need To Reject Errant Messages To Heed God, Ezekiel 12:17-28.

- A. In yet another prophetic sign to the captives in Babylon, the Lord told Ezekiel to eat his food with "quaking" and to drink his water with "trembling" and "anxiety," Ezekiel 12:17-18 ESV.
- B. Ezekiel was to explain to his audience that this sign predicted what Jerusalem's inhabitants would experience: they would partake of their meals with "anxiety" and "dismay" when the land of Israel was stripped of all the valuables it contained in punishment for the violent sins of all who had dwelt in it, Ezekiel 12:19 ESV.
- C. The inhabited cities would be laid waste, the land be left desolate, and the people of Judah would realize that the Lord as the true God had performed this punishment of them because of their sin, Ezekiel 12:20.
- D. To explain why this sign of dreading God's punishment was so important, the Lord explained to Ezekiel that a proverb had been circulating in the land of Israel that "(t)he days grow long, and every vision comes to nothing," Ezekiel 12:21-22. In other words, though the prophets of God like Jeremiah and Ezekiel predicted God's judgment would come and that it would be severe, their hearers had turned complacent, claiming these predictions had not been fulfilled soon enough to make them think they would be fulfilled in their time!
- E. God thus claimed that He would cause this proverb no longer to be spoken in Israel, that Ezekiel was to tell the people that the days of the fulfillment of the predictions of dire judgment were near, Ezekiel 12:23.
- F. The cause of the rise of this errant proverb had been the ministry of false prophets who gave flattering predictions that the people would enjoy peace and prosperity because they were not really sinful. Thus, God said He would put an end to such false prophecies, Ezekiel 12:24.
- G. The Lord claimed that He was the Lord, that He would speak the word that He willed to speak and it would be fulfilled, no longer being delayed, Ezekiel 12:25a. Indeed, God through Ezekiel addressed the "rebellious house" of Israel, claiming He would speak the word of judgment and perform it, Ezekiel 12:25b.
- H. To reaffirm the truthfulness of this whole lesson, the word of the Lord repeated to Ezekiel again that though the people of Judah claimed the prophecies of judgment and doom by God's prophets were a long time off to being fulfilled, God asserted that none of His words would be delayed any longer. The word He had spoken through His credible prophets would soon be fulfilled, Ezekiel 12:26-27.

Lesson: *Moved to complacency in unbelief versus the dire predictions by God's prophets of terrible punishment for sin due to the false messages of false prophets who flattered the people with claims of how good they were, God directed Ezekiel to perform the sign of trembling when he ate his meals to signify the reality of coming judgment, that it would cause great suffering and fear due to the fulfillment of the prophecies of God's true prophets. God would put an end to the false sayings spurred by lying prophets with lying teachings by soon fulfilling His Word of judgment, and Israel would know that the Lord was sovereign and that His warnings of punishment were true.*

Application: *(1) May we realize that God deals with us in accord with what His Word actually states, NOT what some Christian CLAIMS it might say or suggests otherwise than what we clearly read. Failure to heed what we know God's Word says in the face of claims to the contrary is foolish, for God keeps HIS Word! (2) If we read a WARNING in Scripture, we need to apply it seriously, even if the warning was initially given to another party in another era. After all, we are subject to an UNCHANGING God (Hebrews 13:8), so though the actual rules God had other saints heed differ from those He has for us, the righteousness He demanded of saints in former eras is the same level of righteousness He demands of us! (3) There is a tendency for those in apostasy to disrespect God and thus to disrespect His Word, seeking alternate viewpoints taught by other teachers, 2 Timothy 4:3-4. We thus need to RESIST the lure to follow the "crowd" of even fellow believers in believing or doing what clearly violates Scripture, for yielding to peer pressure versus heeding Scripture will still bring God's certain, severe discipline!*