

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Ezekiel: Effective Ministry To The Spiritually Rebellious
Part XLIV: God's Support Of His Servants
(Ezekiel 29:17-21)

I. Introduction

- A. One of the duties of a master in Bible times was that he had to pay the livelihood costs of his servants.
- B. God is the Master of His spiritual servants who do His bidding, and He takes care of their needs, too.
- C. Ezekiel 29:17-21 predicts God's provisions for three sets of His servants -- for His servant Nebuchadnezzar, for His servant Israel and for His servant Ezekiel, so we view this passage for our insight and edification:

II. God's Support Of His Servants, Ezekiel 29:17-21.

- A. God predicted His financial support of His servant, Babylon's king Nebuchadnezzar, Ezekiel 29:17-20:
 - 1. The prophetic message of Ezekiel 29:17-21 was given in the 27th year, the first month and the first day of that month, what refers in our calendar today to April 26, 571 B. C., shortly after the surrender of the city/nation of Tyre to Babylon, Ezekiel 29:17a; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1286.
 - 2. Since Ezekiel in Ezekiel 29:1-16 had begun to predict the fall of Egypt to an invading army, he placed this prophecy of Ezekiel 29:17-20 here to explain that Babylon would be the army that invaded Tyre, Ibid.
 - 3. However, in having defeated Tyre, Nebuchadnezzar had besieged the city for 13 long, hard years where the heads of his soldiers had been rubbed bare from their prolonged use of war helmets and their shoulders had been rubbed raw from carrying wood and stone for building siege mounds, Ezekiel 29:18a.
 - 4. Nevertheless, upon fulfilling God's will that he defeat Tyre, Nebuchadnezzar had obtained no financial reward for his soldiers because Tyre had likely shipped its wealth away in boats to other seaports so that when Tyre's soldiers surrendered, they left no booty for the Babylonians, Ezekiel 29:18b; Ibid.
 - 5. To compensate Babylon financially for serving His interests in defeating Tyre, God then predicted that He would give Egypt's wealth to Babylon in the form of war booty, Ezekiel 29:19-20.
- B. God predicted His national restoration and support of His servant, Israel, Ezekiel 29:21a:
 - 1. After addressing the costs incurred by God's servant Babylon and His reimbursement of that nation, the Lord predicted that He would cause a "horn" to spring up for the house of Israel, Ezekiel 29:21a.
 - 2. A "horn" typified "strength (cf. 1 Sam. 2:1; 2 Sam. 22:3; 1 Kings 22:11; Jer. 48:25)" and "here . . . probably refers to Israel's strength which Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed. When Egypt was restored" as predicted in Ezekiel 29:13-16, "Israel would also be restored as a nation," Ibid., p. 1286-1287.
- C. God predicted His ministry support of His servant, Ezekiel, Ezekiel 29:21b:
 - 1. After addressing God's reimbursement of Nebuchadnezzar and His restoration and support of the nationhood of Israel, the Lord also promised Ezekiel in a figurative way that He would "open your lips among them" so that God's people would realize that God was God, Ezekiel 29:21b ESV.
 - 2. This figurative phrase cannot mean that God would end Ezekiel's divine dumbness predicted in Ezekiel 3:26, for that dumbness ended in the 12th year of Jehoiachin's exile (Ezekiel 33:21-22), and this prophecy came 15 years after that, Ibid., p. 1287. Also, this prophecy would occur after Israel was restored from captivity when Ezekiel would have been 83 years old, and it was unlikely that such an elderly Hebrew man would have survived the long journey from Babylon back to Israel, Ibid. Thus, "the best explanation is that Ezekiel's spoken prophecies which had perplexed the people would become clear when they were fulfilled. Israel would recognize God's character as He faithfully accomplished His promise," Ibid.
 - 3. In other words, God would validate His servant and prophet Ezekiel before the people of Israel who had doubted or disbelieved his ministry, and that by fulfilling his word as the Word of God itself!

Lesson: *In faithful support of His servants, God "paid" His servant Babylon's king Nebuchadnezzar for his financial cost of conquering Tyre by giving him the booty of Egypt, God restored and supported the nation of His servant Israel after her Babylonian Captivity and God vindicated the prophetic ministry of His servant Ezekiel, fulfilling his predictions and causing Israel to realize that his predictions had been the actual Word of God.*

Application: *(1) If we feel anxious over what it may "cost" us to serve the Lord, be it in terms of finances, strength or even credibility before other people, we need only realize that God underwrites all such costs that His servants face that they might fulfill His callings for them. (2) May we then not fret over whatever it may "cost" us to serve the Lord, but simply serve Him in faith that He will meet our every need.*