

# The Visions of Ezekiel

## Lesson 18

D. Vision Four – (24:1 – 25:17) 9<sup>th</sup> Year, 10<sup>th</sup> Day, 10<sup>th</sup> Month (Nebuchadnezzar Siege of Jerusalem)

Ezekiel's Thirty-first Assignment from the LORD

### 1. The Day

**24:1** And **the word of the LORD came to me** in the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth of the month, saying, **24:2** "Son of man, write the name of the day, this very day. The king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day.

Two years and five days had transpired since the last vision was delivered to Ezekiel. It was the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign and the fourth vision from the LORD. Coincidentally, it was also the ninth year of Jehoiachin's exile and captivity in Babylon. Ezekiel was not alone in transcribing the events of this day.

**2 Kings 25:1** Now it came about in the ninth year of his reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, camped against it, and built a siege wall all around it.

**Jeremiah 52:4** Now it came about in the ninth year of his reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, camped against it, and built a siege wall all around it.

**Zechariah 8:19** "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'The fast of the fourth, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth *months* will become joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah; so love truth and peace.'

As we can see, the day was so important in the time of Israel's sin that the LORD recorded the date in three other books. Nebuchadnezzar had arrived in the Southern Kingdom, set camp just outside the walls of Jerusalem and begun the "**siege**" of the city. The siege would take time. David had chosen the hill for his new capital of the Nation of Israel carefully. It was the old Canaanite city of Jebus constructed specifically on the hill with the valleys all around. It was thought by the Canaanites to be an impenetrable city and so it was until David defeated it. Then he sewed up the weakness that he had broken through and the city became one of the most secure walled cities in the world. Nebuchadnezzar would not break through quickly.

Before moving on, we must address the Zechariah 8:19 passage mentioned above. While in Egypt, the Israelites learned the practice of fasting in the worship of Egyptian idols. Upon leaving Egypt, the Israelites did not leave the practice of fasting behind. By the time of the prophet Zechariah, the exiled Israelites from the Northern and Southern Kingdoms had designated the days of major destruction in its history as days of fasting. The LORD did not instruct the Israelites to set these days aside as times of mourning and self-abuse. With all of the destructive days of the kingdoms behind them and the remnant

in exile, the LORD instructed the Israelites to change their hearts about the destructive events in the history of their nation and turn them into days of “joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts.” Why? Had the LORD not brought those destructive days, Israel would never have abandoned the religious abominations she learned in her youth in Egypt.

a) The Parable

**24:3 "Speak a parable to the rebellious house and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Put on the pot, put it on and also pour water in it; 24:4 Put in it the pieces, Every good piece, the thigh and the shoulder; Fill it with choice bones. 24:5 "Take the choicest of the flock, And also pile wood under the pot. Make it boil vigorously. Also seethe its bones in it."**

In Ezekiel 11 we learned that false prophets in Jerusalem were using the idea of a boiling pot to give a false sense of dread to the people of the city and the Southern Kingdom. Little did they know that the LORD would fulfill the words of their lying lips. Just as a pot is set on the fire to boil the parts of an animal for dinner, so, too, the city of Jerusalem would seem to be a boiling pot to the people within and without the city. Here we hear the LORD speak a parable through Ezekiel that describes the contents of the pot called Jerusalem.

b) The First Woe

**24:6 "Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "Woe to the bloody city, To the pot in which there is rust And whose rust has not gone out of it! Take out of it piece after piece, Without making a choice. 24:7 "For her blood is in her midst; She placed it on the bare rock; She did not pour it on the ground To cover it with dust. 24:8 "That it may cause wrath to come up to take vengeance, I have put her blood on the bare rock, That it may not be covered."**

Two woes are found in the LORD’s parable concerning the pot. Even in that day, the people knew that a rusty pot was a deadly pot. The word for “**rust**” is better translated today as *scum*. A pot that has any *scum* in its contents cannot be safely used in any circumstance. It must be cleaned out. It must be disinfected. The LORD said, “**Take out of it piece after piece, Without making a choice.**” Just clean the pot, dump the contents on the rocks. The city had spilt innocent blood on those rocks in the past without a proper burial; therefore, her own pieces were to be taken from the *scum*-filled pot and laid bare on the rock and she would not receive a proper burial either.

c) The Second Woe

**24:9 "Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "Woe to the bloody city! I also will make the pile great. 24:10 "Heap on the wood, kindle the fire, Boil the flesh well And mix in the spices, And let the bones be burned. 24:11 "Then set it empty on its coals So that it may be hot And its bronze may glow And its filthiness may be melted in it, Its rust consumed. 24:12 "She has wearied Me with toil, Yet her great rust has not gone from her; Let her rust be in the fire! 24:13 "In your filthiness is lewdness. Because I would have cleansed you, Yet you are not clean, You will not be cleansed from your filthiness again Until I have spent My wrath on you.**

The second woe concerned the purification of the pot and the contents. The empty pot was to be put back on the fire and heated until the *scum* was burnt away. As for the contents that were being cooked in the pot, they, too, were to be burned in the fire. The contents were not suitable for human consumption in the metaphor and as such, the humans in the city who were to be burned were not suitable for the work of the LORD. They were considered the *scum*, the “**filthiness**” that the Israelites refused to cleanse themselves of, and the LORD would not attempt to do so. Only fire could disinfect the city and its people.

## d) The Warning

**24:14 "I, the LORD, have spoken; it is coming and I will act. I will not relent, and I will not pity and I will not be sorry; according to your ways and according to your deeds I will judge you," declares the Lord GOD."**

The boiling pot would be cleansed, it would be purified. Notice that the LORD had made up His mind. As the people had treated Him without regard, so would He treat them without regard.

## Ezekiel's Thirty-fifth Assignment from the LORD

**24:15 And the word of the LORD came to me saying, 24:16 "Son of man, behold, I am about to take from you the desire of your eyes with a blow; but you shall not mourn and you shall not weep, and your tears shall not come. 24:17 "Groan silently; make no mourning for the dead. Bind on your turban and put your shoes on your feet, and do not cover your mustache and do not eat the bread of men." 24:18 So I spoke to the people in the morning, and in the evening my wife died. And in the morning I did as I was commanded. 24:19 The people said to me, "Will you not tell us what these things that you are doing mean for us?"**

This thirty-fifth assignment must have come to Ezekiel in conjunction with the previous assignment. Why? We must not forget that when the LORD called Ezekiel to be His prophet, He also stuck Ezekiel's tongue to the roof of his mouth. For all those years since his calling, Ezekiel could speak only when the LORD gave him the words to speak. Therefore, the LORD must have given Ezekiel the words concerning the boiling pot to deliver to the people in the morning along with the notification that his wife would die in the evening of the same day. Thus, in the morning, Ezekiel delivered the boiling pot message and then waited for his wife to die.

Upon the death of Ezekiel's wife, the LORD instructed him to grieve privately, but not publicly. If you will remember, in verse 14 the LORD said the following concerning Jerusalem and the boiling pot.

**24:14 "I, the LORD, have spoken; it is coming and I will act. I will not relent, and I will not pity and I will not be sorry; according to your ways and according to your deeds I will judge you," declares the Lord GOD."**

Jerusalem and the *nation of Israel* had been dear to the LORD, and its remnant still is today. Israel was like a wife to the LORD – an unfaithful wife. Silently, for many hundreds of human years, the *nation of Israel* had caused great grief for the LORD. It was time for her to metaphorically die in the Promised Land. For that, the LORD would not grieve publicly. Ezekiel lost his wife to death that day and it was his assignment to portray the attitude of the LORD to the *elders of Israel* and all the people. Surely, Ezekiel's wife had not been unfaithful to him. Her role was different. Her death was to bring extreme heartache to Ezekiel so he could adequately speak his heart to the exiles. Customs were sacred in Israel's heritage. The death of a wife had a certain protocol to be followed and Ezekiel broke that protocol. It caused the exiled people to question him. **"Will you not tell us what these things that you are doing mean for us?"** For that answer, Ezekiel would have to hear from the LORD again.

## Ezekiel's Thirty-sixth Assignment from the LORD

## 2. The Heart of the LORD

**24:20 Then I said to them, "The word of the LORD came to me saying, 24:21 'Speak to the house of Israel, "Thus says the Lord GOD, 'Behold, I am about to profane My sanctuary, the pride of your power, the desire of your eyes and the delight of your soul; and your sons and your daughters whom you have left behind will fall by the sword.**

Ezekiel's wife was the desire of his eyes. The Temple in Jerusalem and the city and its people were the desire of the LORD's eyes. Just as Ezekiel's wife had died, so, too, was the LORD's wife about to die.

a) The Response of the People

24:22 'You will do as I have done; you will not cover your mustache and you will not eat the bread of men. 24:23 'Your turbans will be on your heads and your shoes on your feet. You will not mourn and you will not weep, but you will rot away in your iniquities and you will groan to one another. 24:24 'Thus Ezekiel will be a sign to you; according to all that he has done you will do; when it comes, then you will **know that I am the LORD GOD.**'''

The LORD then gave a specific instruction to the exiles living in the village with Ezekiel. When they heard of the death of Jerusalem, they were to react to its destruction exactly as Ezekiel had reacted to the death of his wife. As such, the people would have the same heart and reaction about Jerusalem as the LORD's.

b) The Mouth of Ezekiel

24:25 'As for you, son of man, will it not be on the day when I take from them their stronghold, the joy of their pride, the desire of their eyes and their heart's delight, their sons and their daughters, 24:26 that on that day he who escapes will come to you with information for your ears? 24:27 'On that day your mouth will be opened to him who escaped, and you will speak and be mute no longer. Thus you will be a sign to them, and they will **know that I am the LORD.**'''

In a most interesting turn of information, the LORD promises in this passage that some will escape death in Jerusalem and arrive in Ezekiel's village to report the destruction seen with their own eyes. The Scripture has alluded to this several times in Ezekiel, but here it is clearly spoken. When that fugitive from Jerusalem arrived to make a report to Ezekiel, Ezekiel's tongue would be set free from the roof of his mouth and he would be able to speak freely with the escapee.

It is sad that Ezekiel had to lose his wife in order to make the application of the LORD's plan clear in the heart and minds of the exiles, but she did die, he did not mourn publicly and the exiles received the message plain and clear.

#### IV. The Enemies of God's Chosen Family. (25 – 32:16)

Ezekiel's Thirty-seventh Assignment from the LORD

A. Ammon

1. The Word to Ammon

25:1 And **the word of the LORD came to me** saying, 25:2 "Son of man, set your face toward the sons of Ammon and prophesy against them, 25:3a and say to the sons of Ammon, 'Hear the word of the Lord GOD!'

To complete the fourth vision, the LORD had a word for Ezekiel to deliver to the people in exile concerning four tribes. The first was the tribe of Ammon.

Ammon was a cousin tribe to the *nation of Israel*. Ammon was the son of Lot, born to him nine months after the destruction in the Jordan River Valley that formed the Dead Sea. Ezekiel was still in his home on the Chebar River and the land of Ammon was a long way to the southeast on the east side of the Jordan River. The north border of the land of Ammon was roughly the Jabbok River and the south border was roughly a line from west to east on the north shore of the Dead Sea at the Arnon River which emptied into the Dead Sea.

## 2. The Sin of Ammon

**25:3b** Thus says the Lord GOD, "Because you said, 'Aha!' against My sanctuary when it was profaned, and against the land of Israel when it was made desolate, and against the house of Judah when they went into exile,

During the days of Zedekiah, Amminadab II, the son of Hissalel was the king of Ammon with Rabbah as his capital. After the fall of Jerusalem, Baalis would become the king in 580 BC. After that, Ammon would become part of the Babylonian Empire under the control of Nebuchadnezzar and the area would be run by administrators or as mentioned in Daniel, *prefects*.<sup>44</sup> Baalis rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar and Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city of Rabbah and left it in total ruins. Years later, Arabs began repopulating the area and today we know it as Amman, Jordan.

Although Nebuchadnezzar would go to Jerusalem first, Ammon would not be out of the way. The king of Babylon would still swing his sword against the cousin of Israel five years after the fall of Jerusalem. Here we have the story of the destruction of Ammon. It is also in Jeremiah 27, 48 and 49. But when the Ammonites saw that Jerusalem had been attacked, Zedekiah removed, and Gedaliah put in charge of the Southern Kingdom, not as king but as governor, the Ammonites devised a plot to kill Gedaliah with the sword. They said "Aha!"

But the Ammonites were unable to kill Gedaliah and had to return their swords to their sheaths and return to their original homeland to be judged by the LORD.

## 3. The Defeat of Ammon

**25:4** therefore, behold, I am going to give you to the sons of the east for a possession, and they will set their encampments among you and make their dwellings among you; they will eat your fruit and drink your milk.

Thinking that Nebuchadnezzar had missed the Ammonites, they retreated to their homes but the LORD made sure Nebuchadnezzar made it to Ammon. The Babylonians were the brutal men, skilled in destruction that the Ammonites had to face. The LORD was going to help Nebuchadnezzar by blowing on the Ammonites with the fire of His wrath. In the furnace of the blacksmith's shop the bellows were used to blow on the flame to cause it to burn with great fierceness and cause even metal to melt. So, too, the fire would be blown to rage against Ammon.

## 4. The Future of Ammon

**25:5** "I will make Rabbah a pasture for camels and the sons of Ammon a resting place for flocks. Thus you will know that I am the LORD." **25:6** 'For thus says the Lord GOD, "Because you have clapped your hands and stamped your feet and rejoiced with all the scorn of your soul against the land of Israel, **25:7** therefore, behold, I have stretched out My hand against you and I will give you for spoil to the nations. And I will cut you off from the peoples and make you perish from the lands; I will destroy you. Thus you will know that I am the LORD."

We can look to Zephaniah 2:9 to join this passage in speaking to this issue. Ammon was about to be literally burned into annihilation. After Nebuchadnezzar's bout with them, "Nothing but ruins are found here by an amazed explorer. Not an inhabited village remains, and not an Ammonite exists on the face of the earth."<sup>45</sup> They should not have said, "Aha!"

**Zephaniah 2:9** "Therefore, as I live," declares the LORD of hosts, The God of Israel, "Surely Moab will be like Sodom, And the sons of Ammon like Gomorrah-- A place possessed by nettles

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<sup>44</sup> Daniel 2:48

<sup>45</sup> Thomson, *Land and Book*, 3:622, The New Unger's Bible Dictionary.

and salt pits, And a perpetual desolation. The remnant of My people will plunder them, And the remainder of My nation will inherit them."

### B. Moab

#### 1. The Word to Moab

**25:8** "Thus says the Lord GOD, "Because Moab and Seir say, 'Behold, the house of Judah is like all the nations,'

Moab was Ammon's brother, born to Lot almost exactly nine months following the destruction that brought about the Dead Sea. "Seir" represented a different tribe, another name for the Edomites, the sons of Esau. Seir was mentioned in this introduction but Ezekiel would prophesy against it following the words of the LORD to Moab.

When Moab and Seir said, "**Behold, the house of Judah is like all the nations,**" it was a reference directly to the Southern Kingdom of Judah being under the control of Nebuchadnezzar in the same way that Ammon, Moab, Edom and Philistia were under the control of Nebuchadnezzar. Technically, Ammon and Moab were taken over during the time of the Assyrian Empire and were transferred to the Babylonian Empire when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Nineveh. But they were also in rebellion against Babylon and in cahoots with Zedekiah, at least for a while. However, at this point in the story, the army of Nebuchadnezzar was still in the Southern Kingdom surrounding the city of Jerusalem. Soon, a large bulk of Nebuchadnezzar's army consisted of Moabites and Edomites. While surrounding Jerusalem, some of Nebuchadnezzar's army would move to invade Moab and Seir to put them in check. They would succumb to the Babylonian king and join his forces – Zedekiah had not. Zedekiah was still in full rebellion and he had locked Nebuchadnezzar outside his gates.

#### 2. The Loss of Moab

**25:9** therefore, behold, I am going to deprive the flank of Moab of its cities, of its cities which are on its frontiers, the glory of the land, Beth-jeshimoth, Baal-meon and

Kiriathaim, **25:10** and I will give it for a possession along with the sons of Ammon to the sons of the east, so that the sons of Ammon will not be remembered among the nations.

**25:11** "Thus I will execute judgments on Moab, and they will know that I am the LORD."

How would Nebuchadnezzar take Moab? By attacking and taking Moab's three primary cities. Although the Ammonite brothers of Moab would be totally annihilated, Moab would not, but they would become part of the Babylonian Empire.

### C. Edom

#### 1. The Word to Edom

**25:12** "Thus says the Lord GOD, "Because Edom has acted against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and has incurred grievous guilt, and avenged themselves upon them,"

Mentioned with Moab was Seir. Properly, it would be Mount Seir, an important high place on the border of Moab and Edom. Even though Edom was a cousin to the Israelites, they had despised Israel for many years. With the grief of Nebuchadnezzar at the door of Jerusalem, the Edomites took the opportunity to vent their anger. But the LORD's anger began long before when Ahaz, king of the Southern Kingdom called for help from Assyria to defeat Resin, king of Aram who was in lockstep with the king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The Chronicles tell us of Edom's actions.

**2 Chronicles 28:** At that time King Ahaz sent to the kings of Assyria for help.

<sup>17</sup> For again the Edomites had come and attacked Judah and carried away captives.

<sup>18</sup> The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the lowland and of the Negev of Judah, and had taken Beth-shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, and Soco with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and

Gimzo with its villages, and they settled there.<sup>19</sup> For the LORD humbled Judah because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had brought about a lack of restraint in Judah and was very unfaithful to the LORD.<sup>20</sup> So Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria came against him and afflicted him instead of strengthening him.<sup>21</sup> Although Ahaz took a portion out of the house of the LORD and out of the palace of the king and of the princes, and gave *it* to the king of Assyria, it did not help him.

Edom should not have carried away Southern Kingdom captives! The LORD had a long memory and He did not forget. It was time for Edom to pay for its sin.

## 2. The Destruction of Edom

**25:13** therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "I will also stretch out My hand against Edom and cut off man and beast from it. And I will lay it waste; from Teman even to Dedan they will fall by the sword. **25:14** "I will lay My vengeance on Edom by the hand of My people Israel. Therefore, they will act in Edom according to My anger and according to My wrath; thus they will know My vengeance," declares the Lord GOD.

Teman was the capital of the tribal area of Edom located on the mountains of Paran. Dedan was the Edomite tribal area to the far east that bordered on today's Persian Gulf. This was the land of all the sons of Esau and all the sons of Ishmael and the sons of Abraham who were given a gift and sent away before Abraham's death and everything he owned was given to Isaac. Nebuchadnezzar killed many Edomites and those who escaped ran far from their homeland.

## D. Philistines

### 1. The Word to the Philistines

**25:15** 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Because the Philistines have acted in revenge and have taken vengeance with scorn of soul to destroy with everlasting enmity,"

We have already touched on the Philistines and their ill will against the Southern Kingdom in verse 12. Here we will look at that mention again found in the Chronicles.

**2 Chronicles 28:**<sup>18</sup> The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the lowland and of the Negev of Judah, and had taken Beth-shemesh, Aijalon, Gedereth, and Soco with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and Gimzo with its villages, and they settled there.

During the days of Ahaz, king of the Southern Kingdom, the Philistines invaded and took control of the aforementioned villages that belonged to Judah. For the rest of the time of the existence of the Southern Kingdom, the Philistines controlled these areas of the Promised Land and they would continue to control them during the Southern Kingdom's exile. From the earliest of days, the Philistines sought to destroy the *nation of Israel*. To this day, the Philistines are still a thorn in the flesh of Israel.

## 2. The Fate of the Philistines

**25:16** therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will stretch out My hand against the Philistines, even cut off the Cherethites and destroy the remnant of the seacoast.

**25:17** "I will execute great vengeance on them with wrathful rebukes; and they will know that I am the LORD when I lay My vengeance on them."'"

In an interesting turn concerning the Philistines, not all the sub-tribes of that group would be destroyed. The Cherethites were part of the Philistine tribe that lived right on the seacoast. As he was running from Saul, David made friends with this portion of the tribe and later employed some of them to be his bodyguards. But after the death of Solomon and during the three hundred and eighty years of the divided kingdom, the relationship with the Cherethites deteriorated and they became mortal enemies of Israel. For that they would be rebuked. We are uncertain as to the status of this portion of the Philistine tribe today.