
EZEKIEL 24: 1 Again, in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, the LORD's word came to me, saying,

The prophet now informs those of the captivity of the very day on which Nebuchadnezzar was to lay siege to Jerusalem, (compare Jer 52:4), and describes the fate of that city and its inhabitants by a very apt similitude, Eze 24:1-14. As another sign of the greatness of those calamities the prophet is forbidden to mourn for his wife, of whom he is to be deprived; intimating thereby that the sufferings of the Jews should be so astonishing as to surpass all expressions of grief; and that private sorrow however affectionate and tender the object, ought to be absorbed in the public calamities, Eze 24:15-18. The prophet, having farther expressed his prediction in plain terms, intimates that he was to speak to them no more till they should have the news of these prophecies having been fulfilled, Eze 24:19-27.

Verse 1

The ninth year - This prophecy was given in the ninth year of Zedekiah, about Thursday, the thirtieth of January, A.M. 3414; the very day in which the king of Babylon commenced the siege of Jerusalem.

EZEKIEL 24: 2 Son of man, write the name of the day, this same day. The king of Babylon drew close to Jerusalem this same day.

EZEKIEL 24: 3 Utter a parable to the rebellious house, and tell them, Thus says the Lord GOD, Set on the cauldron, set it on, and also pour water into it:

Verse 3

Set on a pot - The pot was Jerusalem; the flesh, the inhabitants in general; every good piece, the thigh and the shoulder, King Zedekiah and his family; the bones, the soldiers; and the setting on the pot, the commencement of the siege. The prophet was then in Mesopotamia; and he was told particularly to mark the day, etc., that it might be seen how precisely the spirit of prophecy had shown the very day in which the siege took place. Under the same image of a boiling pot, Jeremiah had represented the siege of Jerusalem, Jer 1:13. Ezekiel was a priest; the action of boiling pots was familiar to him, as these things were much in use in the temple service.

EZEKIEL 24: 4 gather its pieces into it, even every good piece, the thigh, and the shoulder; fill it with the choice bones.

EZEKIEL 24: 5 Take the choice of the flock, and also a pile of wood for the bones under the cauldron; make it boil well; yes, let its bones be boiled in its midst.

Verse 5

Make it boil well - Let it boil over, that its own scum may augment the fire, that the bones - the soldiers, may be seethed therein. Let its contentions, divided counsels, and disunion be the means of increasing its miseries, רתח רתחיה rattach rethacheyha, let it bubble its bubbling; something like that of the poet: - "Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble:

Fire burn, and cauldron bubble."

Very like the noise made by ebullition, when a pot of thick broth, "sleek and slab," is set over a fierce fire. Such was that here represented in which all the flesh, the fat and the bones were to be boiled, and generally dissolved together.

EZEKIEL 24: 6 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Woe to the bloody city, to the cauldron whose rust is therein, and whose rust is not gone out of it! take out of it piece after piece; No lot is fallen on it.

Verse 6

Let no lot fall upon it - Pull out the flesh indiscriminately; let no piece be chosen for king or priest; thus showing that all should be involved in one indiscriminate ruin.

EZEKIEL 24: 7 For her blood is in the midst of her; she set it on the bare rock; she didn't pour it on the ground, to cover it with dust.

Verse 7

For her blood is in the midst of her - She gloried in her idol sacrifices; she offered them upon a rock, where the blood should remain evident; and she poured none upon the ground to cover it with dust, in horror of that moral evil that required the blood of an innocent creature to be shed, in order to the atonement of the offender's guilt. To "cover the blood of the victim," was a command of the law, Lev 17:13; Deu 12:24.

EZEKIEL 24: 8 That it may cause wrath to come up to take vengeance, I have set her blood on the bare rock, that it should not be covered.

Verse 8

That it might cause fury - This very blood shall be against them, as the blood of Abel was against Cain.

EZEKIEL 24: 9 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Woe to the bloody city! I also will make the pile great.

EZEKIEL 24: 10 Heap on the wood, make the fire hot, boil well the flesh, and make thick the broth, and let the bones be burned.

 Verse 10

Heap or wood - Let the siege be severe, the carnage great, and the ruin and catastrophe complete.

EZEKIEL 24: 11 Then set it empty on its coals, that it may be hot, and its brass may burn, and that its filthiness may be molten in it, that its rust may be consumed.

EZEKIEL 24: 12 She is weary with toil; yet her great rust doesn't go leave her; her rust doesn't go by fire.

EZEKIEL 24: 13 In your filthiness is lewdness: because I have cleansed you and you weren't cleansed, you shall not be cleansed from your filthiness any more, until I have caused my wrath toward you to rest.

Verse 13

In thy filthiness is lewdness - *זִמְמָה* zimmah, a word that denominates the worst kinds of impurity; adultery, incest, etc., and the purpose, wish, design, and ardent desire to do these things. Hers were not accidental sins, they were abominations by design, and they were the worse in her, because God had cleansed her, had separated the Israelites from idolatry and idolatrous nations, and by his institutions removed from them all idolatrous incentives. But they formed alliances with the heathen, and adopted all their abominations; therefore God would not spare them. See Eze 24:14.

EZEKIEL 24: 14 I, the LORD, have spoken it: it shall happen, and I will do it: I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to your ways, and according to your doings, shall they judge you, says the Lord GOD.

EZEKIEL 24: 15 Also the LORD's word came to me, saying,

EZEKIEL 24: 16 Son of man, behold, I will take away from you the desire of your eyes with a stroke: yet you shall neither mourn nor weep, neither shall your tears run down.

Verse 16

Behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes - Here is an intimation that the stroke he was to suffer was to be above all grief; that it would be so great as to prevent the relief of tears.

Curae leves loquuntur, graviores silent, is a well-accredited maxim in such cases. Superficial griefs affect the more easily moved passions; great ones affect the soul itself, in its powers of reasoning, reflecting, comparing, recollecting, etc., when the sufferer feels all the weight of wo.

Neither shall thy tears run down - *Τουτο γαρ ιδιον των οφθαλμων εν τοις μεγαλοις κακοις· εν μεν γαρ ταις μετριαις συμφοραις αφθονως τα δακρυα καταρρει, - εν δε τοις υπερβαλλουσι δεινοις φευγει και τα δακρυα και προδιδωσι και τους αφθαλμους·* Achill. Tat. lib. 3. c. 11. For this is the case with the eyes in great calamities: in light misfortunes tears flow freely, but in heavy afflictions tears fly away, and betray the eyes.

EZEKIEL 24: 17 Sigh, but not aloud, make no mourning for the dead; bind your headdress on you, and put your shoes on your feet, and don't cover your lips, and don't eat men's bread.

Verse 17

Make no mourning - As a priest, he could make no public mourning, Lev 21:1, etc.

Bind the tire of thine head - This seems to refer to the high priest's bonnet; or perhaps, one worn by the ordinary priests: it might have been a black veil to cover the head.

Put on thy shoes upon thy feet - Walking barefoot was a sign of grief.

Cover not thy lips - Mourners covered the under part of the face, from the nose to the bottom of the chin.

Eat not the bread of men - לחם אנשים lechem anashim, "the bread of miserable men," i.e., mourners; probably, the funeral banquet.

EZEKIEL 24: 18 So I spoke to the people in the morning; and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.

Verse 18

At even my wife died - The prophet's wife was a type of the city, which was to him exceedingly dear. The death of his wife represented the destruction of the city by the Chaldeans; see Eze 24:21, where the temple is represented to be the desire of his eyes, as his wife was, Eze 24:16.

EZEKIEL 24: 19 The people said to me, Won't you tell us what these things are to us, that you do so?

Verse 19

Wilt thou not tell us - In the following verses he explains and applies the whole of what he had done and said.

EZEKIEL 24: 20 Then I said to them, the LORD's word came to me, saying,

EZEKIEL 24: 21 Speak to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the pride of your power, the desire of your eyes, and that which your soul pities; and your sons and your daughters whom you have left behind shall fall by the sword.

EZEKIEL 24: 22 You shall do as I have done: you shall not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of men.

EZEKIEL 24: 23 Your tires shall be on your heads, and your shoes on your feet: you shall not mourn nor weep; but you shall pine away in your iniquities, and moan one toward another.

EZEKIEL 24: 24 Thus Ezekiel shall be a sign to you; according to all that he has done, you will do. When this comes, then you will know that I am the Lord GOD.

EZEKIEL 24: 25 You, son of man, shall it not be in the day when I take from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their heart, their sons and their daughters,

EZEKIEL 24: 26 that in that day he who escapes shall come to you, to cause you to hear it with your ears?

EZEKIEL 24: 27 In that day your mouth will be opened to him who has escaped, and you shall speak, and be no more mute: so you will be a sign to them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Verse 27

In that day shall thy mouth be opened - What is, When some one who shall have escaped from Jerusalem, having arrived among the captives, shall inform them of the destruction of the city, the temple, the royal family, and the people at large; till then he might suppress his tears and lamentations. And we find from Eze 33:21, that one did actually escape from the city, and informed the prophet and his brethren in captivity that the city was smitten.

Thus he was not only a prophet to foretell such things, but he was also a sign or portent, shadowing them out by circumstances in his own person and family; and thus the prediction, agreeing so perfectly with the event, proved that the previous information was from the Lord.