
SUNDAY SERMON

Hidden Hills Sovereign Grace Baptist Church

Willow, Alaska

Date: June 05, 2016

Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 04.01–17

Text: Ezekiel 04.01–17

Subject: EZEKIEL SERIES –The Tile and the Prophet who laid on his sides

As we come to this lesson today, we must remember that the prophet Ezekiel is in his house, dumb, unable to speak until the LORD bids him speak according to the last two verses of the 3rd chapter.

Ezekiel 3:24-27 *Then the spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thine house. **25** But thou, O son of man, behold, they shall put bands upon thee, and shall bind thee with them, and thou shalt not go out among them: **26** And I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they are a rebellious house. **27** But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: for they are a rebellious house.*

As we consider the lesson today, we find that Ezekiel does not speak, except to the LORD who is directing him. Ezekiel is not said to speak until the 6th chapter when he prophesies against the mountains of Israel concerning the dead which shall be scattered on them; the remnant to be spared; and the utter desolation of the land. In

chapters 4 and 5, Ezekiel becomes a prophetic sign to the nation marked for judgment. When they see this prophet doing as the LORD has commanded him, they can take note that the same things shall occur with them all.

1 ¶ Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and pourtray upon it the city, even Jerusalem: 2 And lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it; set the camp also against it, and set battering rams against it round about. 3 Moreover take thou unto thee an iron pan, and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city: and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This shall be a sign to the house of Israel.

In these first three verses of chapter 4, we see the LORD directing Ezekiel to prophesy against the city of Jerusalem. He is told to take a tile (or a brick, such as would be on the roof of a house) and pourtray (decree or grave - make a picture) upon the tile of the city – Jerusalem. Remember, God chose this man, Ezekiel, a priest in Judah, to go and speak to this people knowing they would not hear the message, for they were marked for judgment. In this message, the hearers would know there had been the Lord's prophet among them.

As Ezekiel portrays the city of Jerusalem on this tile. The LORD commands Ezekiel to set a battle in array. The terms he uses are military terms which many of us will recognize.

- he designs a siege against it, (a siege is the action, on the part of an army, of surrounding a town in order to cut off all outside communication and in the end to reduce it or take it.) –

- builds a fort against it (a fort is a fortified place; a position fortified for defensive or protective purposes, usually surrounded with a ditch, rampart, and parapet, and garrisoned with troops),
- and casts a mount against it. (A mount is a substantial defensive or protective work of earth or other material, thrown up to resist an attack or to advance an assault.)
 - Set the camp also against it – The word translated as camp is also translated as: host 61, company 6, tents 5, armies 4, bands 2, battle 1, and drove. So it speaks of the soldiers – many of them.
- And set battering rams against it round about. – In ancient warfare, battering-rams (battering engines) were constructed for breaking down walls.

Thus, Ezekiel, the priest and prophet, becomes a sign to the children of Israel concerning that which is sure to occur in the near future concerning Jerusalem. Then, the LORD instructs Ezekiel to show himself suffering and bearing their iniquity. This tells us something of how the prophets suffered as signs to the people to whom they were sent.

4 Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. 5 For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel.

Ezekiel was to lie on his left side and the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it. Remember the division of the nation during the days of Rehoboam, son of Solomon. The three hundred and ninety years speak of the time from Rehoboam setting up the calves in Dan and Bethel until Israel was carried away by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria. Beginning with the revolt of the ten tribes from Rehoboam, and the setting up the calves at Dan and Bethel, to the destruction of Jerusalem; which may be reckoned thus: the apostasy was in the fourth year of Rehoboam, so that there remained thirteen years of his reign, for he reigned seventeen years; Abijah his successor reigned three years; Asa, forty one; Jehoshaphat, twenty five; Joram, eight; Ahaziah, one; Athaliah, seven; Joash, forty; Amaziah, twenty nine; Uzziah, fifty two; Jotham, sixteen; Ahaz, sixteen; Hezekiah, twenty nine; Manasseh, fifty five; Amos, two; Josiah, thirty one; Jehoahaz, three months; Jehoiakim, eleven years; Jeconiah, three months and ten days; and Zedekiah, eleven years; in all three hundred and ninety years. So, the prophet looks back to that period bearing their iniquities. Ezekiel lay on his left side one day for each year concerning the northern kingdom. Still, it means not strictly the northern kingdom only, but such of them out of the ten tribes who were also mixed with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

6 And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.

After this great prophet had laid on his left side for 390 days (more than a whole year), he was directed to lie again on his right side, to bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days –

a day for a year. Whether this forty-year-period is also included in the 390 of Israel is difficult to say. I think it is not because there are two distinct periods for two distinct peoples.

7 Therefore thou shalt set thy face toward the siege of Jerusalem, and thine arm shall be uncovered, and thou shalt prophesy against it.

Therefore thou shalt set thy face toward the siege at Jerusalem, -- While Ezekiel was lying either on the left side or the right, his face was to be toward the siege of Jerusalem, which was portrayed upon the tile, and to all the preparations made for the siege and battle. This was to show that everything pointed to that and that it would absolutely and without doubt occur. So, we see the prophet representing the Army of the Chaldeans while he looked directly at the siege. This spoke of the resolve and determination of the enemy against Jerusalem. The city would be taken, nothing would stop it.

and thine arm shall be uncovered, and thou shalt prophesy against it. – With uncovered arms was the manner in which men fought in those times and countries. Most wore long garments, which they were forced, of necessity, to turn them up on the arm, or lay them aside, that they might be able to efficiently handle their weapons, and engage with the enemy. Ezekiel would not speak, but would nonetheless prophesy against Jerusalem by these actions and motions which the Lord directed for him.

8 And, behold, I will lay bands upon thee, and thou shalt not turn thee from one side to another, till thou hast ended the

days of thy siege.

The laying on bands upon Ezekiel represented both the besieged city of Jerusalem, showing that they should be taken and bound as he was. To it represented those who besieged – that is, the Chaldean army, which should be so held by the power and providence of God, that they should not break up the siege until they had taken the city, and fulfilled the whole will and pleasure of God.

9 ¶ Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentiles, and millet, and fitches, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof, according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon thy side, three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof. 10 And thy meat which thou shalt eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day: from time to time shalt thou eat it. 11 Thou shalt drink also water by measure, the sixth part of an hin: from time to time shalt thou drink.

In these three verses, the LORD gives specific directions to the prophet about his eating and drinking during the time of his prophecy. He was to use common food – wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and fitches enough to make bread for the whole time. He was to eat by weight – that is, to measure exactly each eating, no more and no less – twenty shekels a day. This is approximately 10.16 grams. That is 0.358 ounces, less than ¼ of a pound per day. His water was also to be drunk by measure – a sixth part of an hin. A hin is about 5.5 quarts, so a sixth part is less than a quart to be consumed from time to time during each day. This is probably a liberal amount – Dr. Gill says the sixth part of an hin was about one pint! Think about

that! No extras! No pizza, no hamburgers, no peanuts or walnuts – no cashews, no biscuits and gravy, no hushpuppies. Listen, this was a very strict time and would become more and more grave until the fathers would be eating their own sons and the sons their own fathers.

12 And thou shalt eat it as barley cakes, and thou shalt bake it with dung that cometh out of man, in their sight. 13 And the LORD said, Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them. 14 Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! behold, my soul hath not been polluted: for from my youth up even till now have I not eaten of that which dieth of itself, or is torn in pieces; neither came there abominable flesh into my mouth. 15 Then he said unto me, Lo, I have given thee cow's dung for man's dung, and thou shalt prepare thy bread therewith.

Ezekiel was directed to eat his bread like barley cakes and bake it with man's dung – for that would be exactly what would later happen to the children of Israel. No straw, no kindling, no firewood – but dung from a man for baking his bread! Ezekiel was repulsed at this and besought the LORD for mercy!

14 Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! behold, my soul hath not been polluted: for from my youth up even till now have I not eaten of that which dieth of itself, or is torn in pieces; neither came there abominable flesh into my mouth.

God is a merciful God toward his children – and thus had mercy on Ezekiel. The LORD heard his plea and answered him!

15 Then he said unto me, Lo, I have given thee cow's dung for man's dung, and thou shalt prepare thy bread therewith.

It was like the Lord said, "OK, son, I will give you cow's dung instead of man's dung to cook your bread!" What great suffering did this man of God endure to prophesy to God's people!

16 Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment: 17 That they may want bread and water, and be astonished one with another, and consume away for their iniquity.

These two verses show us how vividly Ezekiel's prophetic lying on his side pointed to the exact same thing for those of Jerusalem. Suddenly, there was no more plenty. There became a scarcity of the very necessities to sustain life. Bread by weight and water by measure – and that only. They would cry for bread and water and be astonished (**Deprived for the moment of the power of action – dazed, paralysed. Bewildered, filled with consternation.**) one with another. The people would consume away because of their iniquity. Their sins would surely find them out and they that had sown to the wind would reap the whirlwind.

We need to take this to heart and consider that we know how all of this ended – just as the LORD said. What kind of application can we make for us today? Do our preachers prophesy? Undoubtedly, they do. What does the word prophesy mean except it means telling a

future event, as Ezekiel’s prophecy did? It means: “To speak by inspiration and illumination preaching and expounding the scriptures and rightly dividing them. It means the preaching of the gospel which includes all the New Covenant and the things of the Old which point to it. It means expounding divine mysteries or preaching unto edification, as was practiced in apostolic times. During this time – the apostolic times, they knew in part and they prophesied in part. Now we have the full revelation and can expound the whole word of God.

Ezekiel’s prophecy spoke to the people of Jerusalem at that time. Our prophesying speaks to the saints of the New Covenant who shall come to New Jerusalem and to the church of the firstborn.

1. Prophesying in the New Covenant times must be considered for two main purposes. In the first place, it preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit aimed at the conversion of sensible, quickened sinners.

Acts 2:17-21 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: **18** And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: **19** And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: **20** The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: **21** And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

2. In the second place, prophesying serves to teach and comfort the saints in the churches.

1 Corinthians 14:1 *Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.*

1 Corinthians 14:31 *For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.*

While the preacher must speak to comfort and edification, there is also a charge to him that he “preach the word” – not preach about the word! There is a difference. In doing so, he is to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. God forbid that we should seek to display “showy things,” but rather to prophesy as the word enjoins us:

1 Corinthians 14:2-4 *For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. **3** But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. **4** He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.*

Moreover, as we see the “day approaching,” we are the more bound to prophesy from the Holy Scriptures. Do we not see the day approaching? I believe we do. For now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed!

Hebrews 10:23-25 *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) **24** And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: **25** Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,*

as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Ezekiel knew the day was fast approaching when Jerusalem should be carried away captive – naked and barefoot, eating their bread and drinking their water by measure – even eating their sons and fathers! How horrible the time! Our time is likewise soon approaching – nearer than we would like to believe at times!

The paths of the true ministers of the LORD shall be strewn with trouble more and more as the day approaches! While some professing pastors shall live their rich lives absent from the usual trials and troubles of God’s men, others who truly follow the LORD shall suffer great trials. Paul admonished Timothy this way:

2 Timothy 2:1-10 *Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. 3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. 5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. 6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits. 7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. 8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: 9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. 10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus*

with eternal glory.

Still, in all of the trouble and trials, the man of God – God’s servant must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2Ti. 2:25-26).

I want to encourage each and every one of you to faithfulness. I want to exhort that you show yourselves honest and faithful in all things. Show the on-looking world that you are a devoted child of the living God. Show the on-looking unbelievers what it means to serve and be faithful to the LORD in his church. Support the church – the Bride of Christ, with your time – your presence – your God given talents – and your means. Ezekiel was called of God to stand alone in this horrible day, but, thanks be to God that we are not left to serve alone. We have brothers and sisters in Christ. Let us help one another to build up the congregation of the saints and to warn sinners that the time is drawing nigh! Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but train up your children in the nurture and admonition of the LORD. Fulfil your God-given roles in whatever case you find yourself in. Be a faithful witness at all times and in every place! God bless you all – ye congregation of saints!

To those of you who do not yet know the LORD Jesus Christ, I urge that you believe him without delay. Save yourselves from this present untoward generation. Now, while there is time, He is the one and only savior. Believe him and be saved! The DAY of the LORD is at hand when he shall return in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that believe not!

