

## **Ezekiel, Son of Man**

### **Class 6 - May 6, 2014**

### **Reading: Ezekiel 19-22**

#### **Chapter 19**

Here is another of Ezekiel's parables. In this parable, we are told the story of a lion and cubs where the cubs are each raised to rule, and then taken away.

One of the special names God gave Jerusalem was Ariel, which means "lion of God".

*"Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! Add year to year; Let feasts come around" (Isaiah 29:1).*

The cubs are the kings of Jerusalem. First there is Jehoahaz, Josiah's son and first successor. He was taken away by Pharaoh Necho almost immediately at his rule.

*"Now Pharaoh Necho put him in prison at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and he imposed on the land a tribute of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. Then Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in place of his father Josiah, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. And Pharaoh took Jehoahaz and went to Egypt, and he died there" (2Kings 23:33-34)*

Then after Jehoiakim died (eleven years) his son Jeconiah (also Jehoiachin and Coniah) reigned for only three months. King Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and removed him from the throne and placed his uncle, Josiah's third son Zedekiah, on the throne. It is Zedekiah whose reign Ezekiel speaks to in this parable.

Perhaps the point here is that Jerusalem and its king are absurd to believe they are lions in the world. Their only hope of preservation was the God whom they rejected.

#### **Chapter 20**

Approximately two years after the first vision received from God (around August 14, 591BC), the elders of Israel (in exile) come to inquire of God. God's reply is that *"I will not be inquired of by you"*. God then goes to list the times where He made promises to Israel that were contingent on their conduct. However, they would not forsake idols or false worship. Even as they were asking God what to do, they had idols in their homes. Instead, God would remove them from the land, and only those who wanted to return to Jerusalem to worship would do so.

Perhaps there are two doctrinal points that stand out in this chapter we need to take in. First, God does not hear sinners. This truth is one which is universal to the Old Testament and the New Testament.

*Isaiah 59:2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.*

*John 9:31 "Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him.*

The point of these passages is clear: first, one who is NOT in a relationship with God cannot be confident or have the hope of being heard by God. Second, one who IS in a relationship with God, but has forsaken God, cannot hope to be heard of God without repentance.

The other doctrinal point we need to consider is the concept of the conditional grace of God. God's recounting of Israel's freedom is a clear message about grace. Without value or cause God redeemed Israel. However, He set conditions that they refused to meet. Simply because grace is conditional does not mean it is not free (Romans 5:15) or still grace. Grace cannot be received while we continue in sin (Romans 6:1-2).

Will the people listen? Their last response in verse 49 is that Ezekiel merely speaks parables, and cannot be understood.

## **Chapter 21**

God tells Ezekiel that He is prepared to cut the righteous and the wicked off from the places of holiness in Jerusalem. This demonstrates that even the righteous in Jerusalem would not be spared, nor would Jerusalem be spared for them. It has always been the case that when the unrighteous receive the wrath of God, the righteous suffer too.

*Matthew 5:45 "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."*

When the righteous suffer, it is to their glory and the glory of God. Too, God promises that our suffering has both escape and limit.

*1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

God commands Ezekiel to sigh before the people. This foresees their great lament when they will hear that Jerusalem is lost, and the temple is destroyed.

Once more God comes to Ezekiel. He tells Ezekiel that the sword which destroys Jerusalem (Nebuchadnezzar) is in fact Jehovah's own. Perhaps the passage is saying that Ezekiel is actually holding a sword, and striking his own thigh with it (verse 12). The same passage says that he is to cry and wail while doing so.

A third time in the chapter God commands Ezekiel to act out the coming tribulation. This time he is to make two "ways" or paths for a sword. One of them leads to the Ammonites, and one to Jerusalem. Jerusalem will suffer the sword, but in equal form will the Ammonites.

## **Chapter 22**

Three visions are found here. In the first, God once more illustrates the sins of Jerusalem. This time He points to the princes of the city, of which we have seen many. The second vision likens Israel to a furnace with the dross of metals. Jerusalem is the furnaces, and the Jews there will be consumed in it. The third vision likens Jerusalem to a land without rain. Their sins are filth that is not being washed away. He points again to the princes who have led the iniquity of the land.

God's final words are chilling: *"I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one"*. Will He find such people today?

### **Supplemental Material: Dates in Ezekiel**

Because of the discoveries of Babylonian annals written in cuneiform on clay tablets and other materials, it is possible to calculate precise equivalents of the dates of Ezekiel in terms of our calendar. The thirteen separate dates Ezekiel cites are calculated as follows:

1. His vision call (1:1, 5; 3:16)—July 31, 593 B.C.E.
2. His vision visit to Jerusalem (8:1)—Sept. 17, 592 B.C.E.
3. God's heartbreak over Judah's sin (20:1-2)—Aug. 14, 591 B.C.E.
4. Start of siege of Jerusalem (24:1)—Jan. 15, 588 B.C.E.
5. Judgment against Tyre (26:1)—Apr. 23, 587, to Apr. 13, 586 B.C.E.
6. Judgment against Egypt (29:1)—Jan. 7, 587 B.C.E.
7. Egypt given to Babylon for Tyre (29:17)—Apr. 26, 571 B.C.E.
8. Judgment against Pharaoh (30:20)—Apr. 29, 587 B.C.E.
9. Judgment against Pharaoh (31:1)—June 21, 587 B.C.E.
10. Dirge concerning Pharaoh (32:1)—Mar. 3, 585 B.C.E.
11. Demise of Egypt (32:17)—Apr. 13, 586, to Apr. 1, 585 B.C.E.
12. Arrival of Jerusalem escapee 33:21)—Jan. 8, 585 B.C.E.
13. Vision of the New Jerusalem (40:1)—Apr. 28, 573 B.C.E.