Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

Part 347 – Take A Tile Through Consume Away For Their Iniquity (Ezekiel 4:1-17)

1. What was Ezekiel told to do with a tile and an iron pan?

"(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" (**Ezekiel 4:1-3**).

- We are going to see contexts in Ezekiel like this many times (**Ezekiel 5:1-17**, **Ezekiel 12:1-20**, etc.). Other prophets had similar situations where God had them give visual lessons involving them and objects too (**Isaiah 20:1-6**, **Jeremiah 13:1-7, Jeremiah 18:1-11**, **Hosea 1:1-9**, etc.).
- The tile is a brick of some sort (Strong's # 3843) and the word translated "pourtray" means to engrave or imprint (Strong's # 2710).
- The point was, Jerusalem is in trouble (**Lamentations 2:13**, **Daniel 9:11-12**, and **Joel 1:1-2:3**).
- The city besieged (**II Kings 25:1-4**, **Jeremiah 39:1-2**, and **Ezekiel 24:1-2**).
- The iron pan [flat pan for baking] (**I Chronicles 23:29**) was a wall between Ezekiel and the city. Ezekiel was the messenger of God. Likely, he was showing the division between God and the city because of their sins (**Isaiah 59:1-2** and **Lamentations 3:44**). *"Set thy face against it"* was a sure message (**Psalms 34:16**). Consider how he is a wall in himself to a certain figure as well (i.e. **Jeremiah 1:18**)
- Ezekiel was a sign, in himself, at times (**Ezekiel 24:24**) as other prophets had been (**Isaiah 8:18**).

2. What was Ezekiel told he would be bearing for both Israel and Judah while he laid upon his left and right sides?

Their iniquities: *"(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. (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"* (**Ezekiel 4:4-6**).

- Ezekiel had to bear the iniquities of the people. Priests faced similar challenges (**Numbers 18:1**). There was also, under the Law of Moses, the "scape goat" that did not remove sins, just pushed them to the next year (**Leviticus 16:7-34**; cf. **Hebrews 9:7**; **25**).

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- Bearing the sins of the people did not mean Ezekiel answered for them or took them away. The people are still going to face punishment for their transgressions (**Ezekiel 23:1-4**; **36-49**).
    - Do not liken this bearing of sins to Jesus bearing sins. What Jesus did meant that those whom benefited from such (ex. **Acts 3:19**) had their sins forgiven and forgotten (**Hebrews 9:27-10:18**).
- The number of the days of iniquity in Israel in days that represented years. Jeroboam started the errors that led to Israel's demise and for all I know that may have been 390 years from start (**I Kings 12:25-33**) to finish (**II Kings 17:21-23**). I don't know though and am not going to spend time trying to figure it out. Not much can be learned from the why that we would be able to apply to our faithful service to God. That is the purpose of learning (**James 1:21-25**).
- God had laid on Israel a reverse of this punishment in the past where he used days and turned that to years (**Numbers 14:34**).
- Judah was forty days of Ezekiel on his side to represent their forty years of apostasy. I have no idea where this math comes from. I could try to guess from **II Chronicles 33-36** (with a gap concerning Josiah), but it would be a bad guess.

3. What was Ezekiel prophesying against?

Jerusalem: *"Therefore thou shalt set thy face toward the siege of Jerusalem, and thine arm shall be uncovered, and thou shalt prophesy against it"* (**Ezekiel 4:7**).

- Set thy face toward/against (**Ezekiel 6:2**; **13:17**; **20:46**; **25:2**; **28:21**; **29:2**; **35:2**; **38:2**).
- The bare arm could be about a display of strength (i.e **Deuteronomy 4:34** and **Luke 1:51**) and wrath (**Jeremiah 21:5**). The salvation point that could be meant by this (i.e. **Isaiah 62:10**) doesn't really fit.
- Prophesy against Jerusalem (**Ezekiel 21:1-5**).

4. What lesson was Ezekiel's diet going teach Israel?

The Lord was establishing what the children of Israel were going to eat when they were driven from Jerusalem: *"(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. (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. (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, <u>Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them</u>"* (**Ezekiel 4:8-13**).

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- Like a sacrifice bound tightly to the altar (**Psalms 118:27**), Ezekiel was to be bound.
- Food for exile (cf. **II Samuel 17:27-29**).
- Bread by weight means rationing (**Leviticus 26:26** and **Isaiah 3:1**) because of being besieged (**II Kings 24:10-11**; **25:1-3**).
- It is very possible the preparation of bread using dung of humans was about using dry human dung as fuel for fire. However, to say eating dung is outside of the question isn't necessarily true. The goal of an enemy besieging a city was sometimes to get people to eat even their own waste (**II Kings 18:27**). Yes, God would have Judah turn to dung (**II Kings 6:25** and **Lamentations 4:5**).
- Eating or even touching defiled [unclean] things should have meant A LOT to Israel. For such things they'd be cast out of Israel (**Leviticus 7:21**). Now the Lord is forcing it upon them as they are defiled (**Jeremiah 19:11-13**).
- The Lord had done this to Israel in the not too distant past from this time Ezekiel is a prophet (**Hosea 9:1-3**).

5. After Ezekiel appeals to God, what substitution concerning dung did the Lord say He would make for Ezekiel?

He would substitute cow's dung for man's dung in the baking of the barely cakes: *"(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 4:14-15**).

- Ezekiel's "Ah, Lord…" (**Ezekiel 9:8**; **11:13**; **20:49**). It is a form of lamenting (**Jeremiah 22:18**).
- Ezekiel appealed by saying his soul had never been polluted in reference to eating unclean things (cf. **Acts 10:9-14**).
- Dung can be a fuel source when dried. That is likely what is going on rather than eating it. Either way, yuk! The word translated "prepare" is too broad to say the dung was in the bread (Strong's #6213). Even if it was being used as fuel it was something the people of Israel would have learned NOT to do among themselves (**Exodus 29:14**).
- Ezekiel was a visual source of some of the most difficult lessons taught in the Scriptures in such a way (**Ezekiel 24:15-24**).

6. What was God going to break to cause the people in Jerusalem to be astonied one with another?

The staff [supply] of bread in Jerusalem: *"(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 astonied one with another, and consume away for their iniquity"* (**Ezekiel 4:16-17**).

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- **Leviticus 26:26**, **Psalms 105:16**, and **Ezekiel 14:13**
- Astonishment (**Psalms 60:3**, **Lamentations 4:9-10**, and **Lamentations 5:9**).
- Their “consuming away” means to pine away (**Ezekiel 33:10**) as they realized what they’ve done to themselves (**Ezekiel 36:31**).

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