

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### **Ezekiel: Effective Ministry To The Spiritually Rebellious Part IV: God's Prophecies Of Judgment By Signs, Ezekiel 4:1-5:17**

#### **A. God's Sure, Severe Judgment Seen In The Sign Of The Brick (Ezekiel 4:1-3)**

##### **I. Introduction**

- A. Ministering to a very spiritually hard, rebellious people is a humanly overwhelming task, but God at times actually directs some of His servants to function in that kind of a ministry.
- B. However, God equips His servants to function well in such callings by providing actions that powerfully impact others, and one such action was Ezekiel's presentation of the sign of the brick in Ezekiel 4:1-3.
- C. We view this passage for insight and application in ministering in our era (as follows):

##### **II. God's Sure, Severe Judgment Seen In The Sign Of The Brick, Ezekiel 4:1-3.**

- A. In Ezekiel's first ministry function for the spiritually hardened Hebrew captives in Babylon, God called him to perform an object lesson that involved taking a large sun-baked brick, a major building material used in Babylon (cf. Genesis 11:3), and to engrave on it a map of the city of Jerusalem, Ezekiel 4:1 ESV; Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament, p. 1234.
- B. Then, using either dirt clods or wooden models, Ezekiel was to depict the construction of siege works against the brick city, indicating the attacking army would try to starve its inhabitants by cutting off the flow of food, supplies and weapons to the brick city, Ezekiel 4:2a; *Ibid.*, p. 1234.
- C. Ezekiel was then to construct models of army camps and battering rams all around the brick city, Ezekiel 4:2b. The siege ramp "provided a relatively smooth incline up which siege towers and battering rams could be pushed," and "the ramp allowed the attackers to get above the bedrock and large foundation stones of the city so the smaller and more vulnerable upper stones could be reached by the battering rams," *Ibid.*, p. 1234-1235.
- D. Finally, Ezekiel was to take an iron griddle used for cooking, and place it up on its side to indicate an iron wall, locating this iron wall between himself and the brick city, and set his face in the direction of the wall that blocked the brick city from his face, Ezekiel 4:3a; *Ibid.*, p. 1235.
- E. This whole presentation would act as a sign for the house of Israel, Ezekiel 4:3b, and we explain as follows:
  - 1. The brick with the engraved map of Jerusalem upon it would depict the city of Jerusalem, *Ibid.*, p. 1234.
  - 2. The model siege works typified how an enemy army would surround Jerusalem and cut off its flow of food, supplies and weapons into the city in order to weaken it so that Jerusalem's inhabitants would either surrender or be demoralized and weakened for an easy invasion, *Ibid.*
  - 3. The ramp indicated how the enemy army would use a ramp complete with battering rams to break down the city wall in order to open up the city for enemy soldiers to pour through its wall and attack its people.
  - 4. The iron griddle set up as a wall between Ezekiel and the brick, that depicted the city of Jerusalem, indicated there would be an impregnable spiritual barrier between God and Jerusalem due to Jerusalem's sin, *Ibid.*, p. 1235. As the siege progressed and the people of the city would cry unto God for deliverance, He would not answer their prayers as if an iron wall separated them, for the time for repentance had passed and God in righteousness would be intent only on administering His severe judgment on Jerusalem, *Ibid.*
  - 5. Thus, through means of a simple but yet profound object lesson, God signaled to the Hebrew captives in Babylon the coming siege of Jerusalem, a time of suffering and weakness when appeals to the Lord for mercy and help would not be heard because the city had passed the point of no return regarding judgment.

***Lesson:*** *God had Ezekiel form a culturally moving model of the coming, severe divine judgment that would occur on the city of Jerusalem when she would inescapably face great suffering and a lack of answers to her appeals for God's merciful deliverance due to her having gone beyond the point of no return relative to God's punishment.*

***Application:*** *(1) If we come under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God that we have sinned, may we IMMEDIATELY confess it to escape God's discipline, 1 John 1:9. Otherwise, we risk going beyond the point of no return to where God's discipline must irrevocably, painfully fall, cf. 1 John 5:15-16. (2) May we realize that if we cherish iniquity to exist in our hearts, God will not hear our prayers, that it is like trying to pray through an impenetrable wall, Psalm 66:18 NIV, ESV. (3) Jerusalem would experience starvation, a lack of weapons for self-defense and other livelihood provisions during the siege, so if we face an unusual depletion of livelihood resources in our experience, may we at least CHECK to see if we have violated Scripture, and repent as needed.*