

Major Prophets Study

Lesson Plan Ezekiel Part 2: “Hope of Restoration” (15:22

Opening Prayer

Review Lesson 1: Ezekiel's "dry bones" prophecy was a wonderful word of hope, given the times. As we learned in Part 1, the country of Judah was attacked by Babylon, and many of the people were taken into captivity to Babylon. Ezekiel, who was one of them, was God's prophet to the faithful remnant of Yahweh followers in a foreign land. His message was not a popular one. Just like Jeremiah, Ezekiel was foretelling the total annihilation of the city of Jerusalem, including the destruction of the temple, city walls, and the people left within.

Introduce the Video: In this session, a fictional character, Ezekiel's Aunt Tikva (which means "hope"), tells her story of living with Ezekiel, his wife, Eliana, and the rest of the captives living on the banks of the Chebar River in the province of Babylon. Listen as the captives process the fall of Jerusalem, and also the hope Ezekiel brought to them... hope for God to be their shepherd again, blessing them in the land, and filling them with a new heart for Him, a heart of flesh! (15:23)

Play Video: (15:22)

Discussion Questions:

1. Which part of this lesson impacted you the most?
2. There are false prophets in every generation. The Bible warns us of them. How can we know whether a prophet is authentic or false? Why do you think the false prophets kept saying that the remnant of Yahweh would soon be rescued?
3. Which city was the most wicked city of all? Does this surprise you? Why or why not?
4. Ezekiel's prophetic words were encouraging at times, and at other times, they were predictive of discipline. Which words were encouraging in this lesson? Which ones brought discipline? How did God show them his love, even when they were under discipline?
5. Why was the message of the dry bones well timed? Has God ever given you a "dry bones" promise?
6. Why was hearing and seeing the miracle of the two sticks becoming one in Ezekiel's hand important for them to hear now, after the destruction of Jerusalem?
7. What or who is the desire of your eyes? Let's pray for those special ones to accept God's free gift of salvation!

Closure: This quote is throughout the book. “When these things happen, then they will know that I am the Lord.” Do the prophecies that have come true so far help you believe what is coming?

Closing Prayer: Write the name of the “desire of your eyes” on a 3x5 card. Then, write two or three prayer requests for them on the card. Spend time praying over the requests and thanking God for these special ones.

This Week’s Scriptures: Ezekiel 12-37

Ezekiel Part 2: Video Notes

Review of Part 1

- Tikva ,means “Hope” Tikva is the aunt of Ezekiel
- Living by the River Chebar with the exiles from Jerusalem in Babylon
- About this time, Ezekiel, began to record all of his assignments from Yahweh and his visions down on scrolls.
- Sometimes, he would send them off to Jeremiah in Jerusalem.
- Often, we would receive a letter from Jeremiah as well.

Ezekiel Digs a Hole in the Wall

- Prophetic assignments kept coming to Ezekiel as the end of Jerusalem in Judah drew near.
- Next, Ezekiel had to publicly dig a hole through a wall and carry his belongings through it, pretending to escape..
- This was a sign to the house of Israel. King Zedekiah and his men, would attempt to flee the final battle of Jerusalem. But they would be caught in the snare of Yahweh.
- Zedekiah would be taken to the land of the Chaldeans, yet he would not “see” it. How could this be? We found out later through Jeremiah, that this indeed did happen. Zedekiah was caught, his sons were killed, and they blinded him on the Northern border of Israel, before they arrived in Babylon, just as Ezekiel had predicted! He was then taken to Babylon, but he never “saw” it! (Jeremiah 52:7-11)

Ezekiel tells of the Fall of Jerusalem

- The people were mocking Ezekiel, saying, “The day is prolonged, and every vision fails.” (Ezekiel 12:22)
- But Yahweh became angry at this, saying, “None of my words will be postponed any more. The words which I speak will be done.” (23)
- Yahweh told Ezekiel to eat publicly while quaking, and drink water with apparent anxiety.(12:17)
- Once more, God warned that the people of Judah were so wicked that the land of Israel would be emptied of all who were in it because of the violence they had done. (19)
- Further, God had had enough of the false prophets who were speaking nonsense and had envisioned lies.
- These men were telling us Yahweh would step in and save Jerusalem. That we would be going home soon! 13:8 He explained that their false words, which proclaimed peace when there would be no peace, and their practice of teaching lies instead of truth, was like building a wall with untempered mortar.13;14
- Eventually the foundation of the wall would be uncovered and it would fall, bringing down the false prophets with it. He warned that their idolatry would be punished, because it had estranged them from God. Moreover, the people of Israel were like a vine instead of a tree, only good for burning! (15)

- God had loved Jerusalem, making her into a lovely and royal city.(16) But his people trusted in its fame and beauty and played the harlot.(16:15)
- They had fallen due to pride, abundance of idleness, and wealth..
- They had no concern for the poor and had become haughty.(16:49)
- “You are the adulterous wife, who takes strangers instead of her husband.(16:32) You are more wicked than your sisters Samaria and Sodom.” Jerusalem now had the distinction of being the most wicked city of all.

Why are We Being Punished?

- Are we being punished for the sins of our fathers? No, Yahweh reminded us that our generation was WORSE than our fathers, because each one followed the dictates of his own evil heart, and no one was listening to Him, anymore.(Jer 16:12)
- God assured us, though, that he would judge each one of us individually, according to our ways. (18:30)
- He warned us to repent, and turn from our ways and pray for a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die?
- He declared through Ezekiel, “Turn, and live!” (18:31)

Ezekiel Warns of Bad News

- Ezekiel began to sigh, with a breaking heart, right before our eyes. (21:7)
- When the people asked, “Why are you sighing?” He told us, because bad news is coming. And when it comes, every heart will be feeble, every spirit will faint, and all knees will be weak as water. It is coming!”
- God again reiterated all the sins of Jerusalem. Because of them, the city would be destroyed.
- Ezekiel wrote down a date God gave him that marked the beginning of the final siege in Jerusalem. It was the ninth year of our captivity, the 10th month, on the 10th day of the month. But many of the people still did not believe it.
- They reasoned, “How could Ezekiel really know what was happening in Judah?”

Jeremiah’s Letter Arrives

- A letter from Jeremiah (29) to us warned that two men among us were false prophets--Ahab and Zedekiah.
- Not only were they committing adultery with their neighbor’s wives, they were speaking lying words in the name of Yahweh!
- Jeremiah told us that soon, very soon, King Nebuchadnezzar would kill them before the eyes of the people, and their bodies would be burned.
- It did happen, their names became a curse to the followers of Yahweh in Babylon.
- One of the priests among us named Shemaiah, who claimed to speak for Yahweh, sent a secret letter to the priests back in Jerusalem, telling them Jeremiah was writing letters to us, and that he should be put in prison and in the stocks because he was demented!

- They did indeed put Jeremiah in prison in Jerusalem, but they could not stop the true messengers of Yahweh from telling the truth.
- In the end, God cursed Shemaiah. His family would have no more descendants, and this certainly proved to be true. .

God Would Take Away “The Desire of Their Eyes”

- Yahweh told Ezekiel that he was going to take away “the desire of his eyes with one stroke.”
- Yet, he was not allowed to weep or mourn. (24:15)
- That night, his wife Eliana had a heart attack, and God carried her to the bosom of Abraham.
- Ezekiel was devastated and the pain he felt was excruciating.
- What does this mean?”
- “Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, your arrogant boast, the desire of your eyes, the delight of your souls. Your sons and daughters whom you left behind shall fall by the sword. And you shall do as I have done, you shall neither mourn nor weep.” (24:21)
- Eliana’s death was used as a sign.
- Just as Ezekiel loved and treasured her, they had loved and treasured their temple!
- It was their arrogant boast. It, too, would be taken away with one stroke. No more temple!
- Not only that, their beloved children will also perish.
- Ezekiel also prophesied that a messenger would come to relay to the exiles the news of Jerusalem’s final fall and destruction.
- On the very day of his arrival, Ezekiel would not be mute any longer. He would be able to speak once again. When all these things happened, God said, maybe then, they would know that Yahweh truly was the Lord! (24:27)

Final Two Years

- For the next two years, as the siege labored on in Jerusalem,
- Ezekiel prophesied the destruction of many of Judah’s neighbors, including the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, as well as the inhabitants of Philistia, Phoenicia, and Egypt.
- Some of the words he was given were for the immediate future, and some for the last days.
- Finally, In the 12th year of our captivity, in the 10th month, on the 5th of the month, a man who escaped from Jerusalem came to Ezekiel, to our settlement by the Chebar River, and yelled, “The city has been captured!
- The people wept. Many had left family members in Jerusalem and Judah..
- Their homes, businesses and glorious temple had been completely destroyed.
- Ezekiel could now speak again! He was no longer mute!

Hope for the Future

- God spoke to Ezekiel about the failings of her past shepherds, but also the future of Israel as a people.
- Their shepherd/leaders had not done their jobs! They had eaten the fat, and not gone after the lost. They did not heal the wounded ones, or protect them from the wild beasts.

- So, the flock was scattered, to all parts of the earth.
- But Yahweh told them, one day, HE would be the shepherd of Israel. He would bring them back from all the countries to their own land. He would establish ONE shepherd over them, his servant David!
- He would bless them once again, and be their God.
- He gave Ezekiel so many hopeful promises to look forward to!
- Yahweh would multiply their people... they would populate the land and rebuild the ruins.
- “For I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown.” (36:9.)
- I will multiply the fruit of your trees, and the increase of your fields so you will never bear the reproach of famine among the nations. 36:30.
- “I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you..(36:26)
- And I will sanctify my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, when I am hallowed in your eyes. (36:23)
- Then they will see that the land that had become desolate would become like the Garden of Eden. 36:35

Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones

- Ezekiel became more respected as a prophet.
- The hand of God came upon him and brought him in the spirit to a valley. He looked out and saw bones (37).
- There were very many in the open valley and indeed they were very dry. God said to Ezekiel, “Son of man, can these bones live?”
- Ezekiel replied, “Oh, God! You know!”
- God told him to prophesy to the bones, and tell them to listen! God was going to breathe life into them, and they would live again! He promised to put flesh and skin on them once more, and cause them to live.
- Maybe then, the family of Israel would finally understand that HE is the Lord!
- So as Ezekiel watched, the bones came together... muscles and ligaments appeared, and then the flesh and skin.
- But they were not alive. God called the breath to come from the four winds and breathe on the slain...As Ezekiel watched they rose to their feet and lived! An exceedingly great army! (37:10)
- God said, “These bones are the whole house of Israel. You thought you were lost and cut off, but you are not! Behold, I will open your graves and bring you to the land of Israel. Then you will know I am the Lord!
- I will put My spirit within you, and gather you from every nation where you have gone, and bring you to your own land.

The Miracle of the Two Sticks

- Then, Ezekiel was told to find two sticks. On one stick, he was to write, “For Judah”(Southern Kingdom) and on the other “For Joseph” (Northern Kingdom.)
- While he was explaining what this meant to the people, the two sticks became one in his hand!

- God was telling them that one day the house of Israel would be one nation again, under one king, and that they would never be divided again.
- King David would be their prince forever! They would be established in the land and God would multiply them, and give them an everlasting covenant of peace.
- Yahweh himself would be with them and be their God, and they would be His people. His sanctuary would be in their midst forevermore.

Conclusion

- Ezekiel, who was not allowed to mourn Eliana's death, rejoiced at this prophecy!
- One day, he would be reunited with "the desire of his eyes."
- They would be together again, in the Kingdom of God!
- Until then, Ezekiel would remain God's servant in a foreign land, serving as a watchman, to warn God's people of danger headed their way.
- Also, he was to reveal to them God's plans to rebuild "the desire of His eyes"-- the temple in Jerusalem!