

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

How great is your love and mercy! You held out your hand to a stubborn, rebellious people, urging them to turn from evil, and you had your prophet, Ezekiel, inconvenience and shame himself in order to vividly portray the consequences of sin. Truly there is no God like you!

Today in Your Word

Today you told me how Ezekiel acted out the coming destruction of Jerusalem (the final siege would begin in less than five years). Many if not most of the exiles believed that they would return to Jerusalem soon and that you would never allow the pagan Babylonians to destroy your holy city and temple. Ezekiel warned them that they were mistaken. They had defiled the temple with their idols, and your patience with their wickedness was at an end. Ezekiel used a brick to represent Jerusalem, and he surrounded it with tiny siege-works. Then he lay on his left side facing north to signify the sin of the northern kingdom of Israel. He did this for a few hours each day for 390 days. Once the 390 days were complete, he lay on his right side facing south to signify the sin of the southern kingdom of Judah. He did this for a few hours each day for 40 days. During this enactment of the coming siege, you told him to eat and drink in a way that would show how the starving Jews would eat the food that remained in Jerusalem. Ezekiel was also bound with ropes to picture how the people would be trapped in the city. This elaborate symbolic act was designed to capture the attention of the exiles in Babylon and make them realize that sin had consequences. They could not continue to think that their status as your chosen people made them immune to punishment. Ezekiel also told the exiles that you had been “broken over their whoring heart that has departed from me and over their eyes that go whoring after their idols” (Ezek 6:9). When all the things Ezekiel prophesied came to pass, the people would know “that I am the LORD. I have not said in vain that I would do this evil to them” (Ezek 6:10).

Reflection

Ezekiel kept insisting that your judgment would cause people to know that you are the LORD. This means that divine retribution can be redemptive for those who are willing to forsake sin.

Request

Father, it pains me to think of how shamefully you were treated by your own people. Give me a renewed sense of how much sin hurts your heart, and help me to resist temptation.

Thanksgiving

Thank you for loving me enough to confront me with the consequences of sin! I need to be reminded regularly of the disaster that comes to those who refuse to heed your warnings.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “[After Death the Judgment](#)” – Charles W. Naylor.

Meditation Verse: Ezekiel 7:4.