

EZEKIEL 12 THE NEARNESS OF THE COMING CALAMITIES

Although the majestic vision of God's glory had gone up from the prophet, yet His Word came to him still; and through him, this Word was sent to the people. Its purpose was the same as the purpose of the vision that he had just seen – namely, to set forth the terrible judgments that were coming upon Jerusalem, by which the city and Temple would be entirely laid waste.

The Lord commanded Ezekiel to pack up all the things that were in his house, and to carry some of them out of his house to another place – just like a person who is moving. He was to do this during the daytime. But when the evening came, he was to dig an opening through the wall of his house; and then he was to go out through the opening, carrying more of his personal belongings upon his shoulder. At the same time, he was to cover his face – as if he were a man in trouble, who did not wish other persons to recognize him. Ezekiel did as the Lord commanded him, and his fellow-captives who were there in Babylon with him saw him doing these things.

The next morning, the Lord spoke to Ezekiel and said, “Do they not ask thee what these things mean?” And this is the essence of what he was to tell them: “This sign is to show what will happen to King Zedekiah and all the people who are still left in the city of Jerusalem. Just as I have taken the things out of my house, and moved them to another place; so also shall the rest of the Jews be carried away captive to other lands. And King Zedekiah shall go also. His servants shall break through the city wall, and he shall flee out of the city under the cover of darkness – carrying whatever personal belongings he can carry upon his shoulder. And he shall cover his face to keep the Chaldeans from recognizing him. Yet despite all of this, he shall not escape; for I will give him into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar's soldiers, and they shall carry him away to Babylon. However, although he shall go into that land and die there – he shall not see it with his eyes.” By this, the Lord meant that Zedekiah would not be able to physically see the land into which he was taken; for King Nebuchadnezzar would put out his eyes before he took him there.

After this, the Lord told Ezekiel that when he ate his bread and drank his water, he was to do so with trembling – like one who was afraid that his enemies were coming to take his food away from him. Then he was to tell the people that the Jews who were left in Jerusalem would likewise tremble in fear when their enemies came against them. The Lord said that their enemies would come to destroy their cities, carry away the people, and leave the whole land desolate.

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ The Lord tells Ezekiel to give the people a sign of the flight that Zedekiah would make when the Babylonians captured Jerusalem – verses 1-16
- ❖ He gives them a sign of the famine that would be in the city – verses 17-20
- ❖ Assurance is given that these predictions would come to pass soon – verses 21-28

If anything could have broken the spell of delusion which lay upon the minds of King Zedekiah and his counselors, one might have supposed that these symbolic actions of the prophet would have done it – especially when they were followed up by such a minute description of the approaching calamities. And it was not merely the certainty of those calamities which the prophet was to impress upon them, for he was equally plain as he spoke of their nearness. He knew well how some of the people were ready to treat his message with scorn; but he also knew that although others were not prepared to despise it outright, they were still inclined to put any thoughts about the evil day far away from them. When they heard such an unwelcome message as that which was contained in the earlier part of this chapter, they were ready to automatically dismiss it by some slighting remark, such as this: “Ah, we have heard many words like these before, but matters have not really turned out so bad!” It was not that they merely thought that much time would still elapse before the prophetic words of woe came true; rather, a spirit of unbelief had actually taken such possession of their minds regarding the reality of the prophecies themselves, that they deemed them to only be dreams from the prophet’s own mind. And there were still others among the Jews who simply presumed upon the delay that they expected would intervene between the prophecies and their fulfillment.



When we look back upon the times of these Old Testament prophets, we cannot help wondering at the obstinate unbelief in which so many of the people seem to have shut themselves up – albeit in defiance of the most solemn warnings of God; and in spite of the lowering appearances of Providence, which seemed to give certain indications of a coming storm of judgment. But it would be proper for us to remember that the spirit of unbelief and false security, which prevailed so extensively back then, is always springing forth anew; and it is plainly announced in the New Testament that it will form a distinguishing characteristic of the end times. Even in our own days, the Bible is looked upon by thousands as a Book that is antiquated and out-of-date. Many regard the facts of which it testifies as words that were only useful in the distant past; and so the sacred Volume, which is intended to nourish and support a living faith, has become stale and dead to them. They will not acknowledge that this Word of God – being the expression of His own eternal nature – has truth within its pages that lives and abides forever, and that is still as new and as fresh to the heart of faith as at the very moment when it proceeded from the lips of those who spoke as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit. How necessary it is for us to make sure that the foundation of our faith does not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is found in the Word of God!

We praise You, Lord, for Your faithfulness in keeping Your Word, so that we may rest assured that You will fulfill all the things which You have spoken. Amen.