

# **Ezekiel 24 - The Boiling Cauldron; Ezekiel's Wife Dies; A Refugee Travels to Babylon with News of Jerusalem's Destruction**

## I. Imminent judgment upon Judah (Ezek 1:1—24:27)

- (2) Prophecies of coming judgment against Judah and Jerusalem (Ezek 4:1—24:27)
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### **The Boiling Pot**

On the day when the siege and capture of Jerusalem began, the Lord gave the prophet an allegory and an acted parable to deliver concerning the siege and ultimate capture of the city. He was to set a rusted caldron (Jerusalem) on the fire, fill it with water, and throw pieces of flesh (the inhabitants of Jerusalem) into it. He was to pile fuel under it to make it boil furiously (the siege and its severities).

Then Ezekiel was to pull out pieces of flesh indiscriminately from the kettle (the universal dispersion when the siege was over). Then he was to set the empty pot on coals so that its rust and filth might be molten and consumed (the purifying judgments were to continue long after the destruction of the city).

### **Ezekiel 24**

- (v) News of the initial siege reaches the Babylonian exiles (24:1-2)

1 Now **the word of the LORD came to me** in the **ninth year**, in the **tenth month**, on the **tenth of the month**, saying,

1 And the word of the LORD came to me in the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth of the month, saying,

1 In the ninth year, in the tenth month, and on the tenth day of the month, this message came to me from the LORD:

1 Again in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

- "...the word of the LORD came to me" - a new revelation from God to Ezekiel

- The last date given by Ezekiel was in 20:1 (August 14, 591 BC). That was the seventh year from Jehoiachin's captivity (597 BC)

- "...ninth year" - now two years later, which would be 588 BC

- "...tenth month" - known as *Tevet* in the Hebrew calendar, equivalent to December/January on our calendar

- "...tenth of the month" - this would be January 15, 588 BC

2 "Son of man, write the name of the day, this very day. The king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day.

2 "Son of man, write the name of the day, this very day. The king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day.

2 "Son of Man, write down the name of this day, this very day. The king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem on this very day.

2 Son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this same day: the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day.

- God pointed out to Ezekiel that on the very day of this revelation, Nebuchadnezzar had begun his siege of Jerusalem.

- This was the day Ezekiel had been pointing to in his prophecies for over four years. The date was so significant that it was also mentioned by the writer of 1 and 2 Kings and by Jeremiah (Cf. 2 Kings 25:1; Jer 39:1; 52:4).

— Zech 8:19 mentions this day as a day of fasting due to the mourning of the Jewish people over the destruction of the first Temple, the downfall of the kingdom of Judah, the final deportation of the Jewish people to Babylon.

(vi) Parable of the boiling pot (24:3-14)

(a) Enacted (24:3-5)

3 Present a parable to the rebellious house and say to them, '**This is what the Lord GOD says:** "Put on the **pot**, put *it* on and also pour water into it;

3 Speak a parable to the rebellious house and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Put on the pot, put *it* on and also pour water in it;

3 So compose a parable for the rebellious house. Tell them, 'This is what the Lord God says: "Prepare your pot for boiling! Set it in place. Fill it up with water, too.

3 And utter a parable unto the rebellious house, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Set on a pot, set it on, and also pour water into it:

- This is the parable that Ezekiel was to pass along to the Jews already in exile in Babylon...

- "...This is what the Lord GOD says" - the content of this parable comes completely from the mouth of God

- "...pot" - cauldron, a symbol of judgment (Cf. Jer 1:13-14; Ezek 11:3,7,11; Micah 3:2-3)

4 Put in it the pieces of meat, Every good piece, the thigh and the shoulder; Fill *it* with choice bones.

4 Put in it the pieces, Every good piece, the thigh and the shoulder; Fill *it* with choice bones.

4 Gather together the best pieces of meat on it— including the thighs and the shoulders— and fill it with the choicest bones.

4 Gather the pieces thereof into it, even every good piece, the thigh, and the shoulder; fill it with the choice bones.

- This was similar to his message in Ezek 11, in which some leaders used the figure of a cooking pot to give Jerusalem false hope

- The people thought that being in the pot (Jerusalem) would keep them safe, but here Ezekiel prophesied that the pot would be their place of destruction

5 "Take the choicest of the flock, And also stack wood under the pot. Make it boil vigorously. Also boil its bones in it."

5 "Take the choicest of the flock, And also pile wood under the pot. Make it boil vigorously. Also seethe its bones in it."

5 Take the best bones from the flock, pile wood under the pot for the bones, bring it to a boil, and then cook the bones in it."'"

5 Take the choice of the flock, and burn also the bones under it, and make it boil well, and let them seethe the bones of it therein.

- The parable depicts a large pot/cauldron filled with only the finest meats and bone, positioned over a fire and boiled vigorously at high heat

### **The Interpretation**

6 'Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: "**Woe** to the bloody city, To the pot in which there is **rust** And whose **rust** has not gone out of it! Take out of it piece after piece,

### **Without making a choice.**

**6** 'Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "Woe to the bloody city, To the pot in which there is rust And whose rust has not gone out of it! Take out of it piece after piece, Without making a choice.

**6** "This is what the Lord GOD says: 'How terrible it is for that blood-filled city, to the pot whose rust remains in it, whose rust won't come off. Empty it one piece at a time. Don't let a lot fall on it.

**6** Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it! bring it out piece by piece; let no lot fall upon it.

- "...Woe" a "woe" is declared by God because there is "rust" in the pot

- "...rust" [2x] - *chelah*, scum; in this context it refers to disease or sin in the pot (Cf. 2 Chr 16:12)

— Despite that fact that the pot is boiling intensely, the "scum" remained. The city had become so deep in depravity that even fire could not remove the disease of sin unless the entire cauldron (city) was destroyed.

- From the mixture of boiling water with scum, each chunk of meat was to be removed one by one

- "...Without making a choice" - or, "let no lot fall upon it" [KJV]. Many decisions in the OT were made by casting lots (Cf. Lev 16:7-10); 1 Chr 24-26) so when God declared that "no lot had fallen" on the individual pieces of meat, He was rejecting the people's belief in their special (chosen) status before Him.

### **7 "For her blood is in her midst; She placed it on the bare rock; She did not pour it on the ground To cover it with dust.**

7 "For her blood is in her midst; She placed it on the bare rock; She did not pour it on the ground To cover it with dust.

7 Her blood was in it. She poured it out onto bare rock. She didn't pour it out on the ground, intending to cover it with dirt.

7 For her blood is in the midst of her; she set it upon the top of a rock; she poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust

- "...her blood is in her midst" - highlights Jerusalem's guilt, indicating the city's involvement in violence and bloodshed

- "...on the bare rock" - Jerusalem's guilt was so severe that it remained exposed like blood on a bare rock

- "...She did not pour it on the ground To cover it with dust" - this figure is taken from Lev 17:13, where the Mosaic Law required that whenever an animal was slain, the blood was to be poured out and covered with dirt (Cf. Deut 12:16,24; 15:23).

— Yet in her unrepentance, Jerusalem, the bloody city, purposefully left all of her guilt exposed

8 "So that it may cause wrath to come up to take vengeance, I have put her blood on the bare rock, So that it will not be covered."

8 "That it may cause wrath to come up to take vengeance, I have put her blood on the bare rock, That it may not be covered."

8 In order to stir up my anger and in order to take vengeance, I set the blood on a bare rock so that it cannot be covered.'

8 That it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance; I have set her blood upon the top of a rock, that it should not be covered.

- Because of Jerusalem's sin of violence, symbolized by the reddish scum in the cauldron, God's wrath would be poured out. The stains that the city's sins had caused were resistant to boiling away, serving as a catalyst for vengeance.

— Since the blood had been exposed on a bare rock with no vegetation to conceal it, it remained visible as a testament to Jerusalem's guilt

**9 Therefore**, this is what the Lord GOD says: "**Woe** to the bloody city! **I also will make the wood pile great.**

9 'Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "Woe to the bloody city! I also will make the pile great.

9 "Therefore this is what the Lord GOD says: 'How terrible it is for that blood-filled city—I'm also going to add to my pile of kindling.

**9** Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city! I will even make the pile for fire great.

- "Therefore" - now comes the application, which is based on the interpretation of the parable (v6-8)

- "...Woe" - another "woe" against Jerusalem; the content of this "woe" was God's direct action

- "...I also will make the wood pile great" - God would turn up the heat on the fire so much that it would melt the cauldron. Thus, the city of Jerusalem would suffer massive destruction in this judgment.

10 "Heap on the wood, kindle the fire, Cook the meat thoroughly And mix in the spices, And let the bones be burned up.

10 "Heap on the wood, kindle the fire, Boil the flesh well And mix in the spices, And let the bones be burned.

10 Pile up the wood! Make the fire burn hot. Boil the meat! Mix the seasonings. Burn those bones to a crisp!

10 Heap on wood, kindle the fire, consume the flesh, and spice it well, and let the bones be burned.

- The idea behind this list is that as the water continues to boil in the pot, the liquid eventually evaporates causing the remaining contents to thicken until even the bones are broken down and boiled away

— This first step of judgment represents the burning away of the contents of the cauldron, the people of Jerusalem

11 "Then set it empty on its burning coals So that it may be hot And its bronze may glow, And its filthiness may be melted in it, Its rust eliminated.

11 "Then set it empty on its coals So that it may be hot And its bronze may glow And its filthiness may be melted in it, Its rust consumed.

11 Make the pot stand empty on the coals until its bronze glows red, its rust can be scoured off, and its dross completely removed.

11 Then set it empty upon the coals thereof, that the brass of it may be hot, and may burn, and that the filthiness of it may be molten in it, that the scum of it may be consumed.

- The second step of judgment represents the burning away of the cauldron itself, symbolizing the destruction of Jerusalem. According to historical accounts in Scripture (Cf. 2 Kings 25:8-12; Jer 39:8-10; 52:12-16), this is exactly what happened in 586 BC.

— Following Nebuchadnezzar's orders, the Babylonian military officer Nebuzaradan breached the walls of Jerusalem. He then burned down the city, including the Temple, the royal palace, and all the major houses in Jerusalem.

— After the city's fall, Nebuzaradan supervised the deportation of a large portion of Jerusalem's inhabitants. In order to quell any potential future rebellions, he also executed several key figures of the Jewish leadership, including priests, nobles, and soldiers.

— He only left a remnant of the poorer population in the land to tend the vineyards and fields, and he appointed Gedaliah as the governor over them

12 "She has wearied *Me* with **work**, **Yet her great rust has not gone from her**; *Let her rust be in the fire!*

12 "She has wearied *Me* with toil, *Yet her great rust has not gone from her*; *Let her rust be in the fire!*

12 The pot wearies me, but its thick rust won't come off, even with fire.

12 She hath wearied herself with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her: her scum shall be in the fire.

- "...work" - *teun*, derived from *aven*, a root that means "trouble," "sorrow," or "wickedness"
- "...Yet her great rust has not gone from her" - even though the contents of the cauldron were heavily boiled, it still could not remove "her great rust" unless the entire cauldron was destroyed.
- Sin had become such an indelible part of Jerusalem that the only way to eradicate it was by destroying the city

13 "In your filthiness is outrageous sin. Because **I would have cleansed you**, Yet you are not clean, **You will not be cleansed from your filthiness againUntil I have expended My wrath on you.**

13 "In your filthiness is lewdness. Because I *would* have cleansed you, Yet you are not clean, You will not be cleansed from your filthiness again Until I have spent My wrath on you.

13 There is wickedness in your obscene conduct. Even though I've cleansed you, you uncleanness cannot be washed away. You cannot be cleansed again until my rage against you has subsided.'

13 In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee.

- "...*I would* have cleansed you" - God endeavored many times previously to purify the city, but each time was in vain

- "...You will not be cleansed from your filthiness again" - God decided not to extend another opportunity for cleansing and renewal

- "...Until I have expended My wrath on you" - no further attempts at purification would be made until God's wrath toward the city was finally exhausted

— The near-term fulfillment of this was the destruction of Jerusalem during the third siege by Nebuchadnezzar; the ultimate fulfillment is at the end of the future seven-year Tribulation period, when God's full wrath is spent.

14 **I, the LORD, have spoken; it is coming and I will act.** I will not overlook, I will not pity, and I will not be sorry; **according to your ways and according to your deeds** I will judge you," declares the Lord GOD."

14 I, the LORD, have spoken; it is coming and I will act. I will not relent, and I will not pity and I will not be sorry; according to your ways and according to your deeds I will judge you," declares the Lord GOD."

14 "'I, the LORD have spoken. It will happen, because I'm going to do it. I won't hold back, have compassion, or change my mind. They'll judge you according to your ways and

deeds,' declares the Lord GOD."

14 I the LORD have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord GOD.

- "I, the LORD, have spoken" - the Lord sealed His decision by vowing to fulfill His promises. There was no room for reversal or reconsideration regarding this decree of judgment.

- "...it is coming and I will act" - it is in God's nature to fulfill His pronouncements. He who issues the word guarantees its fulfillment.

- "...according to your ways and according to your deeds" - the city would be judged based on her own conduct and actions

(vii) Death of Ezekiel's wife (24:15-26)

(a) Announced (24:15-17)

15 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

15 And the word of the LORD came to me saying,

15 This message came to me from the LORD:

15 Also the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

- A new revelation from God to Ezekiel, the final prophecy of judgment against Judah and Jerusalem in the book of Ezekiel

— Nebuchadnezzar's army was about to circle Jerusalem, preparing for an extended siege. From Ezekiel's viewpoint, Jerusalem's collapse was imminent.

16 "Son of man, behold, I am about to take from you what is **precious to your eyes** with a **fatal blow**; but you shall not mourn and you shall not weep, and your tears shall not come.

16 "Son of man, behold, I am about to take from you the desire of your eyes with a blow; but you shall not mourn and you shall not weep, and your tears shall not come.

16 Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down.

- "...precious to your eyes" - "the desire of your eyes" [KJV] refers to Ezekiel's wife, whom God was about to take home

- "...fatal blow" - *maggephah*, a stroke [KJV]. Ezekiel was only in his early 30s at this point, so his wife would have been the same age or younger, making her death even more surprising and tragic

- God instructed Ezekiel to not show any outward emotion or signs of sorrow at the death of his wife

**17 Groan silently; do no mourning for the dead. Bind on your turban and put your sandals on your feet, and do not cover your mustache, and do not eat the bread of other people."**

17 Groan silently; make no mourning for the dead. Bind on your turban and put your shoes on your feet, and do not cover your mustache and do not eat the bread of men."

17 You are to weep in silence, but you are not to participate in mourning rituals. You are to keep your turban on your head and your sandals on your feet. You are not to cover your mouth or eat what your comforters bring to you."

17 Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men.

- God further instructed Ezekiel to abstain from following the Jewish mourning customs of the day

- "Groan silently" - Ezekiel was not permitted to cry or groan out loud, but could silently. This refers to the typical wailing for the dead (Cf. Mark 5:38)

- "...do no mourning for the dead" - this would include the designated days for sitting *shiva* and reciting lamentations (Cf. 2 Sam 1:17; 11:26)

- "...Bind on your turban" - Ezekiel was not allowed to remove his turban to put dust on his head, a sign of mourning (Cf. Joshua 7:6; 1 Sam 4:12; Job 2:12)

- "...put your sandals on your feet" - going barefoot was a symbol of grief (Cf. 2 Sam 15:30; Is 20:2)

- "...do not cover your mustache" - he could not cover his lips, which included not trimming his mustache and avoiding veiling his face, both practices associated with mourning (Cf. Lev 13:34; 2 Sam 19:24; Micah 3:7)

- "...do not eat the bread of other people" - he could not participate in the funeral feast

#### *(b) Explained (24:18-26)*

18 So I spoke to the people in the morning, and in the evening my wife died. And in the morning I did as I was commanded.

18 So I spoke to the people in the morning, and in the evening my wife died. And in the morning I did as I was commanded.

18 So I spoke to the people in the morning, and my wife died that evening. The next morning, I did as I had been commanded.

**18** So I spake unto the people in the morning: and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.

- The word of the Lord (v15-16) came to him in the morning; his wife died that same evening, and the next morning Ezekiel obeyed the commands of the Lord (v17)

19 And the people said to me, "Will you not tell us what these things *mean* for us, that you are doing?"

19 The people said to me, "Will you not tell us what these things that you are doing mean for us?"

19 Then the people told me, "Are you going to explain what these things that you're doing should mean to us?"

**19** And the people said unto me, Wilt thou not tell us what these things are to us, that thou doest so?

- It is interesting that rather than mourning the death of Ezekiel's wife and comforting Ezekiel for his loss, the exiled Jews are more interested in what the death of his wife meant for them

— They sought an explanation for the symbolic acts that went against Jewish customs and traditions, recognizing that Ezekiel had been living a symbolic life on their behalf. They had come to learn that Ezekiel's symbolic actions carried divine messages.

20 Then I said to them, "The word of the LORD came to me, saying,

20 Then I said to them, "The word of the LORD came to me saying,

20 So I responded, "This message came to me from the LORD:

**20** Then I answered them, The word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

- The interpretation of Ezekiel's unusual actions in light of the death of his wife came straight from the mouth of God

21 'Speak to the house of Israel, "This is what the Lord GOD says: 'Behold, I am about to profane My sanctuary, the pride of your power, that which is precious in your eyes and the longing of your soul; and your sons and your daughters whom you have left behind will fall by the sword.

21 'Speak to the house of Israel, "Thus says the Lord GOD, 'Behold, I am about to profane My sanctuary, the pride of your power, the desire of your eyes and the delight of your soul; and your sons and your daughters whom you have left behind will fall by the sword.

21 'Tell the house of Israel that this is what the Lord GOD says: "Look! I'm about to profane my sanctuary, the source of your proud strength, the desire of your eyes, and the object of your affection. Your sons and daughters, whom you've left behind, will die by the sword.

21 Speak unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the excellency of your strength, the desire of your eyes, and that which your soul pitieh; and your sons and your daughters whom ye have left shall fall by the sword.

- Ezekiel explained that the death of his wife symbolized the destruction of God's temple and the slaughter of the people of Jerusalem—people loved by those in exile

- The city's sons and daughters would fall by the sword right inside the Temple compound, thus defiling it with their dead bodies. The fulfillment of this prophecy is found in 2 Chr 36:17.
- Ezekiel had lost the "delight" of his "eyes" (v16 and the exiles would lose Jerusalem, the "delight of their eyes," to Babylon (v25)
- Just as Ezekiel had experienced a great personal tragedy, so those already in captivity would feel the tragedy when they heard about Jerusalem's fall and the massacre of their loved ones there

22 And **you will do just as I have done**; you will not cover *your* mustache, and you will not eat the bread of *other* people.

22 You will do as I have done; you will not cover *your* mustache and you will not eat the bread of men.

22 That's why you will soon be doing what I've just done. You are not to cover your mouth or eat what your comforters bring to you.

22 And ye shall do as I have done: ye shall not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of men.

- "...you will do just as I have done" - when word of Jerusalem's destruction reached the exiles, they will follow Ezekiel's actions after the death of his wife (Cf. v17)

23 Your turbans will be on your heads, and your sandals on your feet. You will not mourn and you will not weep; but **you will rot away in your guilty deeds, and you will groan to one another.**

23 Your turbans will be on your heads and your shoes on your feet. You will not mourn and you will not weep, but you will rot away in your iniquities and you will groan to one another.  
 23 Your turbans will be on your heads and your sandals will be on your feet. You won't mourn or weep. Instead, you'll waste away in your sins. Every one of you will groan to his relative.

23 And your tires shall be upon your heads, and your shoes upon your feet: ye shall not mourn nor weep; but ye shall pine away for your iniquities, and mourn one toward another.  
 - "...you will rot away in your guilty deeds, and you will groan to one another" - instead of displaying the typical mourning rituals after Jerusalem's destruction, the exiles would realize that they own sins had led to the Temple's demise, leading to deep remorse

24 So Ezekiel will be a sign to you; according to all that he has done, you will do. When it comes, then you will know that I am the Lord GOD."

24 Thus Ezekiel will be a sign to you; according to all that he has done you will do; when it comes, then you will know that I am the Lord GOD."

24 That's how Ezekiel will be an example for you. You'll be doing exactly what he has done. When it happens, then you'll know that I am the Lord GOD."

24 Thus Ezekiel is unto you a sign: according to all that he hath done shall ye do: and when this cometh, ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

- This verse encapsulates Ezekiel's prophetic mission: to present his entire life as a sign to the people (exiles) of Israel living in Babylon.

— Ezekiel experienced profound visions of heaven, but also embodied a suffering servant. In many cases, the messenger (Ezekiel) was the message.

### The Sign of Silence

**25** 'As for you, son of man, will *it* not be **on the day** when I take from them their stronghold, the joy of their splendor, that which is precious in their eyes and their heart's longing, their sons and their daughters,

**25** 'As for you, son of man, will *it* not be on the day when I take from them their stronghold, the joy of their pride, the desire of their eyes and their heart's delight, their sons and their daughters,

**25** "And now, Son of Man, on the day that I take their strength, joy, and glory from them, those whom they love to watch, the focus of their affection—their sons and daughters—

**25** Also, thou son of man, shall it not be in the day when I take from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their minds, their sons and their daughters,

- "As for you, son of man" - God is now speaking to Ezekiel directly

- "...on the day" - on the day the Temple in Jerusalem is destroyed

— To the Jews, the Temple was a revered structure, it was the people's strength ("stronghold"), its beauty was the "joy of their splendor."

— The Temple was "precious in their eyes" because it was the focal point of their false sense of security, and also "their sons and their daughters," investing their hearts in them

26 that on that day the one who escapes will come to you with information for *your* ears?

26 that on that day he who escapes will come to you with information for *your* ears?

26 at that time, a fugitive will come to you and will bring you the news.

26 That he that escapeth in that day shall come unto thee, to cause thee to hear it with thine ears?

- An announcement of the arrival of a refugee. When Jerusalem is destroyed, one person would escape the Babylonians, come to the exiles in Babylon, and cause them to hear a report about the city's fall.

— This refugee would obviously not arrive on the same day Jerusalem fell as it was far too long of a journey from Jerusalem to Babylon to be completed in a day. Two passages can

be considered to pinpoint the date of the refugee's arrival: Jer 52:4-6; Ezek 33:21-22.

— The Jeremiah passage gives us the start date of the siege (January 15, 588 BC) and the end date (July 587 BC), a time of about 18 months. At the end of the 18-month siege, that passage tells us that the famine had intensified in the city and the people had run out of food.

— Ezek 33:21-22 records the arrival of the refugee, which was January 8-9, 585 BC.

Taking these two passages, it took the refugee from July 587 BC to January 585 BC to travel from Jerusalem to Babylon (Fruchtenbaum).

— Some speculate that this is far too long to travel from Jerusalem to Babylon. They point to Ezra 7:9 which suggests that the returnees from captivity traveled from Babylon to Jerusalem in about four months.

-- Others (Constable) calculate the date from the beginning of Jerusalem's fall to the time the refugee arrived in Babylon as five months. See note: **Dating Issues** at 33:21 for more detail.

(viii) Ezekiel's dumbness to end (24:27)

27 **On that day** your mouth will be opened to him who escaped, and you will speak and no longer be silenced. So **you will be a sign to them**, and they will know that I am the LORD."

27 On that day your mouth will be opened to him who escaped, and you will speak and be mute no longer. Thus you will be a sign to them, and they will know that I am the LORD."

27 Your mouth will freely speak to the fugitive. You won't be silent any longer. You'll be a sign to them. Then they'll know that I am the LORD."

27 In that day shall thy mouth be opened to him which is escaped, and thou shalt speak, and be no more dumb: and thou shalt be a sign unto them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

- Ezekiel had been commanded to remain silent before his fellow exiles except to pronounce the prophecies God gave him (Cf. 3:25-27). His part-time dumbness would end when the prophecies he had delivered were confirmed (Cf. 33:21-22).

- "On that day" - on the day the refugee arrived, not the day the Temple was destroyed

- In Ezek 3:26, Ezekiel was struck mute except as the Lord elected to speak through him. He continued in this temporary muteness for 7-1/2 years, during which time he delivered all of the messages from Ezek 4-33. During this time, he had no idle conversation or chatter, he only spoke exactly what God told him to speak.

- "...you will be a sign to them" - even during his silent waiting, Ezekiel would continue to be a sign or living symbol to God's people. Eventually, the entire nation would know who the God of Israel is.

The significance of the date when Ezekiel's silence ended extends beyond the mere resumption of his ability to speak. It marks a pivotal moment in his prophetic ministry, signaling a shift in focus from prophecies of judgment to messages of consolation and restoration. Until this point, Ezekiel had been primarily delivering warnings of impending doom to Judah and Jerusalem. However, with the lifting of his silence, Ezekiel's prophetic discourse would soon transition to themes of hope and restoration for Israel.