



my grandma time

...doing simple things together!

Week 35, Day 1 --- Ezekiel 1-4

Week 35, Day 2 --- Ezekiel 5-8

Week 35, Day 3 --- Ezekiel 9-12

Week 35, Day 4 --- Ezekiel 13-15

Week 35, Day 5 --- Ezekiel 16-17

Week 35, Day 6 --- Ezekiel 18-19

Week 35, Day 7 --- Ezekiel 20-21

Week 35, Day 1 --- Ezekiel 1-4

Today we begin the last long book of prophecy in the Old Testament. It is filled with hard words and strange visions. It is not God's final word before Jesus comes, but it is a message that is intended to turn the people of Israel in captivity back toward God. Ezekiel is a priest, but he is a priest in captivity. Try to imagine the scene that Ezekiel is caught up in in the first chapter. Our difficulty in picturing what he sees is due to the fact that what he sees is indescribable. We use awesome to describe many things, but the vision that Ezekiel saw was truly awesome. It was so awesome he fell face down on the ground. Just as with Isaiah and Jeremiah, Ezekiel will be told by God to do things that are physical in addition to his speaking and writing to communicate his message. His first task is to live laying down for a little more than a year. During this time he will eat just enough food and water to keep him alive. Ezekiel is totally obedient to God, but there is one thing he will not do. The Jews under siege in Jerusalem had long ago given up any thought of dietary restrictions and the ceremonial law. God wants Ezekiel to identify with the people under siege, but Ezekiel is unwilling to eat unclean food. God honors this desire and lets Ezekiel cook his bread over a fuel that is considered clean.

As you are reading through this book for the first time, don't try to figure out what every symbol means. Instead, write down your overall impressions. What is God trying to say? How would you react if you saw what Ezekiel was doing and heard what he was saying?

Week 35, Day 2 --- Ezekiel 5-8

Have you ever been really hungry? I'm talking about being so hungry that you would eat anything that had even the least nutritional value. I certainly haven't. In fact, I've rarely missed a meal in my life. Israel was a prosperous nation and they enjoyed their wealth. Ezekiel was in Babylon and even though he was a slave he had a regular food. Jerusalem was under siege and people were literally eating each other in an attempt to survive. Israel had rejected God and God had withdrawn. This is probably the best picture of what happens when we reject God. It isn't that He comes and His presence brings destruction. Instead, He withdraws and the absence of His presence opens up our lives for the entrance of the evil that surrounds us.

Week 35, Day 3 --- Ezekiel 9-12

Short term thinking leads to rebellion. If this life is all there is, then I have no need for God. This is what the children of Israel had come to believe. They lived for themselves and cared nothing for others or God. God's response is very clear.

Week 35, Day 4 --- Ezekiel 13-15

People who speak for God have an awesome responsibility. I must be very careful with these words I write. My desire is to clarify what God has said in the Bible. It is important for you to understand that the Bible is true and you can trust it. Anything else you read outside the Bible is the writing of an imperfect human being. I'm not saying that you can't benefit from reading. I am saying to be cautious. Test everything you read against the truth of the Bible. Seek God's truth with a desire to be as pure as God desired His people Israel to be.

Vines are really useless. We have a big grape vine that produces hundreds of feet of cane every year. It is good for nothing except to be chopped up and turned into compost. That is it is good for nothing when the season is over. The purpose of the vine is to carry water from the roots to produce grapes. Israel, the vine, was not producing grapes. Since it was not producing grapes it was worthless and had to be severely pruned. This picture of Israel as the vine will appear many times in the gospels.

Week 35, Day 5 --- Ezekiel 16-17

Ezekiel tells us a couple of stories. He uses vivid images that would have meant much to his audience to communicate God's deep disappointment and anger with the people of Israel. Who represents Israel in chapter 16? How does God feel? What do you think offends God the most? Remember that God desires and has provided for a deeper relationship with you than He had with Israel. You are loved with and incredibly deep love.

Week 35, Day 6 --- Ezekiel 18-19

What direction are you headed? Are you moving toward God or away from God? Chapter 18 describes the essential element of the new covenant that God is bringing to His people. In the old covenant introduced through Moses the people of Israel were treated as a people. They were evaluated as a community, rewarded as a community, and punished as a community. God is now saying that the time is come for each individual to decide. The message of hope is that it is never too late to turn toward God. Chapter 19 is another lament. The royal house of Israel was once very powerful. Now it is weak and useless.

Week 35, Day 7 --- Ezekiel 20-21

Judah did not go into captivity in Babylon as a single group. It took several years for all of Judah to be taken captive and for the city of Jerusalem to be destroyed. Ezekiel was taken captive in one of the earliest groups. Can you hear God's frustration in these chapters? In spite of several defeats and many people taken into captivity, the people who remain in Judah and even the captives continue to disobey God. God has decided what He is going to do and has made it very clear through multiple prophets what He desires for His people to do. God is not looking for conversation at this point. He is looking for action, specifically God is looking for His people to change their minds (repent) and return to Him.