

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

The prophet now informs those of the captivity of the very day on which Nebuchadnezzar was to lay siege to Jerusalem, (compare Jeremiah 52:4), and describes the fate of that city and its inhabitants by a very apt similitude, Ezekiel 24:1-14. As another sign of the greatness of those calamities the prophet is forbidden to mourn for his wife, of whom he is to be deprived; intimating thereby that the sufferings of the Jews should be so astonishing as to surpass all expressions of grief; and that private sorrow however affectionate and tender the object, ought to be absorbed in the public calamities, Ezekiel 24:15-18. The prophet, having farther expressed his prediction in plain terms, intimates that he was to speak to them no more till they should have the news of these prophecies having been fulfilled, Ezekiel 24:19-27.

Verse 1

The ninth year - This prophecy was given in the ninth year of Zedekiah, about Thursday, the thirtieth of January, A.M. 3414; the very day in which the king of Babylon commenced the siege of Jerusalem.

Verse 3

Set on a pot - The pot was Jerusalem; the flesh, the inhabitants in general; every good piece, the thigh and the shoulder, King Zedekiah and his family; the bones, the soldiers; and the setting on the pot, the commencement of the siege. The prophet was then in Mesopotamia; and he was told particularly to mark the day, etc., that it might be seen how precisely the spirit of prophecy had shown the very day in which the siege took place. Under the same image of a boiling pot, Jeremiah had represented the siege of Jerusalem, Jeremiah 1:13. Ezekiel was a priest; the action of boiling pots was familiar to him, as these things were much in use in the temple service.

Verse 5

Make it boil well - Let it boil over, that its own scum may augment the fire, that the bones - the soldiers, may be seethed therein. Let its contentions, divided counsels, and disunion be the means of increasing its miseries, **וְעָבַר עָלֶיהָ וְעָבַר עָלֶיהָ** (rattach rethacheyha), let it bubble its bubbling; something like that of the poet: -
 Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble:
 Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

Very like the noise made by ebullition, when a pot of thick broth, **סֵלֶךְ וְסֵלֶךְ** is set over a fierce fire. Such was that here represented in which all the flesh, the fat and the bones were to be boiled, and generally dissolved together.

Verse 6

Let no lot fall upon it - Pull out the flesh indiscriminately; let no piece be chosen for king or priest; thus showing that all should be involved in one indiscriminate ruin.

Verse 7

For her blood is in the midst of her - She gloried in her idol sacrifices; she offered them upon a rock, where the blood should remain evident; and she poured none upon the ground to cover it with dust, in horror of that moral evil that required the blood of an innocent creature to be shed, in order to the atonement of the offender's guilt. To **וְעָבַר עָלֶיהָ** was a command of the law, Leviticus 17:13; Deuteronomy 12:24.

Verse 8

That it might cause fury - This very blood shall be against them, as the blood of Abel was against Cain.

Verse 10

Heap or wood - Let the siege be severe, the carnage great, and the ruin and catastrophe complete.

Verse 13

In thy filthiness is lewdness - **זִמְמָה** (zimmah), a word that denominates the worst kinds of impurity; adultery, incest, etc., and the purpose, wish, design, and ardent desire to do these things. Hers were not accidental sins, they were abominations by design, and they were the worse in her, because God had cleansed her, had separated the Israelites from idolatry and idolatrous nations, and by his institutions removed from them all idolatrous incentives. But they formed alliances with the heathen, and adopted all their abominations; therefore God would not spare them. See Ezekiel 24:14.

Verse 16

Behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes - Here is an intimation that the stroke he was to suffer was to be above all grief; that it would be so great as to prevent the relief of tears.

Curae leves loquuntur, graviorés silent,

is a well-accredited maxim in such cases. Superficial griefs affect the more easily moved passions; great ones affect the soul itself, in its powers of reasoning, reflecting, comparing, recollecting, etc., when the sufferer feels all the weight of wo.

Neither shall thy tears run down - In light calamities tears flow freely, but in heavy afflictions tears fly away, and betray the eyes.

Verse 17

Make no mourning - As a priest, he could make no public mourning, Leviticus 21:1, etc.

Bind the tire of thine head - This seems to refer to the high priest's bonnet; or perhaps, one worn by the ordinary priests: it might have been a black veil to cover the head.

Put on thy shoes upon thy feet - Walking barefoot was a sign of grief.

Cover not thy lips - Mourners covered the under part of the face, from the nose to the bottom of the chin.

Eat not the bread of men - (lechem anashim), the bread of miserable men, i.e., mourners; probably, the funeral banquet.

Verse 18

At even my wife died - The prophet's wife was a type of the city, which was to him exceedingly dear. The death of his wife represented the destruction of the city by the Chaldeans; see Ezekiel 24:21, where the temple is represented to be the desire of his eyes, as his wife was, Ezekiel 24:16.

Verse 19

Wilt thou not tell us - In the following verses he explains and applies the whole of what he had done and said.

Verse 27

In that day shall thy mouth be opened - What is, When some one who shall have escaped from Jerusalem, having arrived among the captives, shall inform them of the destruction of the city, the temple, the royal family, and the people at large; till then he might suppress his tears and lamentations. And we find from Ezekiel 33:21, that one did actually escape from the city, and informed the prophet and his brethren in captivity that the city was smitten.

Thus he was not only a prophet to foretell such things, but he was also a sign or portent, shadowing them out by circumstances in his own person and family; and thus the prediction, agreeing so perfectly with the event, proved that the previous information was from the Lord.