

## EZEKIEL: GOD'S STUNTMAN

American history has a long list of stunt men and daredevils who've captured the nation's attention with their daring do. People like to see a breath-taking feat.

In 1829, Sam Patch, *"the Jersey Leaper"*, erected a 100 foot platform above Niagara Falls - then leaped off the platform into the churning waters below. In the 1920s a flagpole sitter, Al "Shipwreck" Kelly, stayed aloft on top of a flagpole for 49 days - imagine seven weeks on the ball of a flagpole.

In more recent times, Evel Knievel broke

every bone in his body jumping motorcycles over cars, and fountains - even the Snake River Canyon.

People like to see a stunt, and that's why God sent a stuntman to the nation Judah. I like to call Ezekiel *"the stuntman of the Bible"*. He was a prophet, but he delivered his prophecies in some wild and weird and bizarre ways.

Ezekiel lived with the exiled Jews in Babylon, and acted out skits that taught spiritual lessons.

## GOD'S STUNTMAN IN ACTION

### CHAPTER 12

Once more Ezekiel gives his neighbors in Babylon something to talk about. Each morning he packs his belongings and sets them outside. At twilight he loads his stuff on his shoulders and walks away. I don't know about you, but I hate to move. Once a decade is fine with me. All the sorting, boxing, packing - what a hassle. Ezekiel though is moving every day.

And rather than leave home through the front door, God tells Ezekiel to dig a hole in the wall. He's to bear the indignity of being forced to escape from his own house. You could say Ezekiel's house was a literal *hole in the wall*.

In verse 10-11 God explains his purpose.

"Thus says the LORD God: 'This burden concerns the prince in Jerusalem and all the house of Israel who are among them.' ' Say, 'I am a sign to you. As I have done, so shall it be done to them; they shall be carried away into captivity.'

Ezekiel's stunt simulates the captivity that's to befall the Jews in Jerusalem.

In the last half of the chapter whenever Ezekiel eats - he acts like he's been starving for weeks, and has finally found food. Ezekiel grabs bread with his hands - stuffs it in his mouth - guzzles his glass of water. He scarfs his food like your pastors do when they do lunch at Sonny's Barbecue.

Ezekiel is mimicking the desperate conditions that exist in a city under siege - the same conditions Jerusalem will experience.

### CHAPTER 21

In verse 6 Ezekiel is told to "sigh" - or to *moan and groan*. His *sigh* is a *sign*.

A sigh is a powerful sign... If your boss begins your annual review with a sigh you know you're in trouble. If your spouse starts a conversation with

a sigh you know here comes a complaint. If a pastor tells a joke and the congregation sighs it's a bad sign. And it takes a hard, stubborn person to ignore such a sign and continue on in the grievous behavior.

Ezekiel's sigh is symbolic of Judah's reaction to God's judgment - the whole nation will sigh. Verse 7, "every spirit will faint... all knees will be weak as water."

### CHAPTER 24

Ezekiel boils water, loads the pot with cuts of meat, then cooks up a stew. The oils and fats rise to the surface forming a picture of Jerusalem. The people of the city had become the scum of the earth, and now the scum is in serious hot water.

But that's not all that happens to commemorate the beginning of the siege. Here's where Ezekiel takes one for the team.

In verse 18 he tells us, on that very evening his own wife died. As God was watching His wife die in Jerusalem, He illustrates His grief by taking Ezekiel's wife before the Jews in Babylon.

Verses 25-27 tells us from the day the siege began until the day word arrived that the city had fallen Ezekiel remained mute. He didn't say a word for 23 months.

Five months after the fall of Jerusalem the news finally arrived in Babylon, and Ezekiel again opened his mouth. But until the judgment was complete God had said all He intended to say on the subject, and Ezekiel was to remain silent.

Guys, we have a hard time staying quiet for *23 minutes*, let alone *23 months*. We're so quick to give advice - sometimes the Lord wants us to just be silent.

Bible Scan - Ezekiel 12-32

"Ezekiel is a sign to you; according to all that he has done you shall do..." Ezekiel 24:24

## WHICH JINGLES REALLY JANGLE?

### COMING JUDGMENTS

In chapter 12, God uses a prophet to counter a proverb. The Jews have a jingle – verse 22, “The days are prolonged, and every vision fails.” In other words, *don't panic, nothing is imminent, the prophets are wrong - and if they're right the fulfillment of their prophecy is for the distant future.*”

But God has His own jingle, verse 23, “The days are at hand, and the fulfillment of every vision.” Here's the battle of jingles. *Who's jingle will really jangle?* The Jews say judgment is future. God says it's just around the corner.

God's message is summed up in verse 25, “I am the LORD. I speak, and the word which I speak will come to pass; it will no more be postponed; for in your days, O rebellious house, I will say the word and perform it...”

It reminds me of today's skeptics who scoff at the biblical signs that point to Jesus' second coming. Folks who believe it at all, push it into the distant future. Whereas, if you study carefully the biblical prophecies in light of current events you will conclude that Jesus is returning sooner rather than later. Today, *our jingle* ought to be Ezekiel's... “The days are at hand, and the fulfillment of every vision.”

### FALSE PROPHETS

There's another jingle I'm sure you've heard before, “*What you see is what you get*” - but don't believe it. What you see is not always what you get!

Recently, a consumer advocacy group examined some food products to see how well their names matched their contents. It turns out a jar of *Prego Spaghetti Sauce with Mushrooms* contained ½ of a mushroom. *Patio Beef and Bean Burritos* total just 7 beans per burrito. The total vegetable content of *Banquet Vegetable Pie* equals 10 peas, 1/20<sup>th</sup> of a carrot, and 1/19<sup>th</sup> of a potato. And three *Pillsbury Hungry Jack Buttermilk Pancakes* comprised less than a teaspoon of buttermilk.

The point is - buyer beware! Labels can be misleading.

Which introduces us to the problem in chapter 13. Judah entertained false and foolish prophets. Their false advertising is expressed in verse 6, “Thus says the LORD! But the LORD has not sent them...” Verse 3 sums up these prophets, “Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing.”

### THE BLAME GAME

The Jews had a proverb they were using as an excuse – in 18:2 they say, “The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?”

You've probably never heard this proverb, but you're familiar with its underlying philosophy – it's surprisingly relevant to modern society. The idea is that a child isn't responsible for his actions. He or she is the sole result of the parent's treatment. Hey, it's the old blame game. Blame your problems on mom and dad.

It reminds me of the beleaguered parent who said, “We were born in the wrong era. We were kids when everything was the kid's fault. Now we're parents when everything is the parent's fault.” We live in an age of victimization. Everybody is a victim – nobody's responsible for their own personal choices and decisions. Even good and godly parents are getting a bum rap. As the saying goes, “Every tub sits on its own bottom.” Parents have a profound influence on their children, but bad parents aren't an excuse for bad choices once a child knows better.

Ezekiel 18 tells the story of three generations. A godly man has a wicked son who sires a grandson who turns out to be godly. *Go figure.* The point of the parable is simple – every man is judged for his own attitudes and actions. Verse 20 sums up the lesson, “The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.”

## Devotion Box - Representing God

After Ezekiel's wife dies, God orders the prophet not to cry or mourn her death. His job is to represent God's feelings - not his own. This is an important aspect of ministry. Often we're tempted to tell people exactly what we think, or how we feel – but that's not our job. We're to speak God's words, not our own. We're to represent His attitudes – not our frustrations. It's so easy to let our personality muddy the waters of ministry – our feelings can color the message God wants delivered.

Ezekiel is to show no emotion, for Jerusalem is getting what she deserves. It's interesting though, while a stone-faced Ezekiel ministers in Babylon, a teary-eyed Jeremiah weeps in Jerusalem. And you have to combine both men's ministries to get the true picture of God's emotions. Yes, justice is being served, but God is also grieving over His people. God is both *just and merciful.*

## Devotion Box - God is Searching

Ezekiel 22:30 is an oft quoted verse, “So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.” Jeremiah was in prison, while Ezekiel and Daniel were in Babylon, so God searched for a man to take a stand.

The gap between God and His people was enormous. The people needed an intercessor. God needed a representative. He wanted a person who would stand for Him, and kneel for people. He searched for such a person, but found no one. I believe God still searches for people to stand in the gap.

What about us? *Do we love people enough to bow down? Do we love God enough to speak up?* Are we willing to get in the gap and do all we can to bring together God and people?

## YOUR CHEATIN' HEART

My dad was a huge country music fan, and his favorite song was by Hank Williams, "*Your Cheatin' Heart*". And that's the title we could give to Ezekiel 16. In fact, a cheatin' heart is a common theme in a lot of country songs.

You've probably heard the joke, "What happens when you play a country music song backwards?" Here's the answer, "The guy sobers up, he gets rehired at the factory, his dog stops howling, and his wife comes back home."

Here're a few lines from country songs that help describe a cheatin' heart...

"Does my ring hurt your finger when you go out at night?"

"You're so cold, I'm turning blue."

"Loving here, living there, and lying in between."

"There ain't no queen in my king-sized bed."

"It's sad to go to the funeral of a good love that has died."

"She got the goldmine, I got the shaft."

"You must think my bed is a bus stop, the way you come and go."

"You're a hard dog to keep under the porch."

These are all lines God could've sung to describe His relationship with Judah. He married her out of Egypt, and blessed her as His people - only to find out that Judah was an adulteress. She was spiritual harlot. She was unfaithful to God, and followed after idols. As Hank Williams would say, Judah had a *cheatin' heart*.

In fact, there's another line from a country song that describes the first 14 verses of chapter 16, "I bought the shoes that just walked out on me." God's benevolence was the reason Judah became a great nation.

In the chapter the Jews are described as an abandoned infant - tossed out into an open field as soon as she's born. That's when God finds her, washes her, clothes her, and adorns her with beauty - then He takes her as His wife.

It's reminiscent of the musical, "*My Fair Lady*". An Eng-

lish professor takes a little urchin off the streets, Eliza Doolittle. He trains Eliza to be poised, mannered, and noble. Through his training he turns her into a polished, and beautiful young lady. And to his surprise he falls in love with her and takes Eliza as his bride.

But this is where the comparisons end.

From verse 15 onward God's Eliza turns out to be a flirt, rather than fair - and a whore, rather than a lady. Rather than thank God for His benevolence, she uses her beauty to play the harlot. Verse 15, "you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry on everyone passing by who would have it." Judah took the blessings of God, gold and silver, and made them into idols.

Verse 21 shows how far she plunged. Judah took her sons and daughters - children dedicated to God - and made child sacrifices to false gods.

Verse 25 tells us, "You offered yourself to everyone who passed by, and multiplied your acts of harlotry." The NASB translates the passage, "You spread your legs to every passer-by to multiply your harlotry."

Judah was a spiritual slut. She made no attempt to be faithful to God. She cared nothing about faithfulness.

The nation Judah followed after Egyptians gods, then Assyrian gods, then Babylonian gods. She would go to bed with any god, but the one true God.

Guys, a word to us - don't assume idolatry was just an Old Testament phenomena. Idolatry occurs when our heart grows too attached to someone or some thing. Our deepest longings should be reserved for God and Him alone. When He starts to play second fiddle there's a problem. We've erected an idol. 1 John 5:21 tells New Testament believers, "keep yourselves from idols."

## WILL THE REAL KING OF TYRE PLEASE STAND UP

In verse 11 Ezekiel's prophecy peers beyond the King of Tyre to his source of inspiration - the patriarch of pride. Verses 12-13, "You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God..." When was Ethbaal II in the garden of Eden? It wasn't Adam and Eve and Ethbaal. The only person other than God to join the first couple in the garden of Eden was the serpent called Satan. And this is the subject in the following verses.

Ezekiel looks beyond Ethbaal to the source of his inspiration, the devil himself. It's as if no denouncement of pride is complete without a condemnation of its originator.

Satan was once Lucifer, "the anointed cherub" according to verse 14. He was stationed above the throne of God, until pride entered his heart. He wanted to be his own god, and ever since has tried to perpetuate his sin.

The name "*Lucifer*" means "*light bearer, or day star*". Here he's called the "seal of perfection" or *perfection's measuring stick*. "Full of wisdom and beauty" - Satan isn't an ugly little man in a red suit - with a hooked nose, horns, and pitchfork. He's a creature of exquisite beauty and enormous intellect.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11:14 that the devil has the ability to appear as an "angel of light" - in appealing packages. He's the gorgeous blonde in a string bikini (full of beauty), or the hip professor with the air-tight arguments (full of wisdom). As Shakespeare put it, "The devil hath power to assume a pleasing shape."

Notice too, in verse 13, "The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created." Lucifer was created with the ability to make music. Some Bible scholars believe that before his fall Satan was heaven's worship leader. Perhaps this is how pride entered his heart. He got tired of giving praise, and one day decided to steal the praise. This could also explain why Satan has been so successful in using pop music to steal away the hearts of young people.

God hates the sin of pride, and in verse 16 He describes how He booted Lucifer, the chief perpetrator of pride, out of heaven: "I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones."

# Bible Scan - Ezekiel 12-32

Calvary Chapel

If you have questions on tonight's study email Pastor Sandy - [sandyadams@calvarychapel.org](mailto:sandyadams@calvarychapel.org)  
For back issues of Bible Scan study guides: [www.calvarychapelstonemountain.com/biblescan.htm](http://www.calvarychapelstonemountain.com/biblescan.htm)

Calvary Chapel Announcements - March 11, 2001: The latest issue of LikeMinds explains our building project and how you can get involved ... Check out today's Announcement Sheet for our Calvary Connection Home Fellowships... CC Christian School (Grades K5-5th) is registering students for the 2001-2002 school year... Tuesday, March 13th 7:00PM—Ladies Pizza, Praise & Prayer... Monday, March 26th 7:00PM — Annual Church Business Meeting... Tuesday, March 27th 7:30 PM— Ladies Night Out.

Next Bible Scan - March 18 - Ezekiel 33-48

“So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.” - Ezekiel 22:30

Bible Scan  
Memory  
Verse

## ANOTHER REASON TO TRUST THE BIBLE

In Ezekiel 26:3-5 the Lord says, “I am against you, O Tyre, and will cause many nations to come up against you, as the sea causes its waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for spreading nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken,” says the Lord GOD...

In the year that Jerusalem was conquered Nebuchadnezzar also laid siege to the city of Tyre. The siege lasted an unbelievable 13 years, from 586-573 BC. Tyre's ability to bring in food and supplies by sea prolonged the siege. When the Babylonians finally breached the walls it was a hollow victory. The inhabitants of Tyre had moved to an island ½ mile offshore. Nebuchadnezzar had conquered an abandoned city. And Tyre was left alone for the next 241 years.

Until 332 BC when a 19 year old Greek general known as Alexander the Great launched an attack. Over a period of 7 months Alexander took the ruins of the city Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed and used the rubble to build a causeway out into the ocean. It was 200 feet wide and extended from the shore to the island. *The site of the old city was scraped*

In Ezekiel 14:13 the Lord says of Judah, “Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it...” God isn't punishing the nation for *a single slip*, or *a second* or *two in sin* – the Jews are guilty of a long season of rebellion. For several centuries they've been living in “persistent unfaithfulness”. Guys, God is patient with us, but His patience has its limits.

*clean like the top of a rock just as Ezekiel said.* Alexander marched his army across the causeway and took the city.

And the most amazing aspect of Ezekiel's prophecy is in verse 14 when he predicts that Tyre will never be rebuilt. Understand, the ancient site sits on top of a freshwater spring that pumps 10 million gallons of water daily into the ocean. That's enough water to supply a modern city, yet the site remains barren. As Ezekiel predicted 2500 years ago, the ancient city of Tyre remains to this day nothing but a rock where a few fishermen spread and dry their nets.

In his book *“Science Speaks”*, Peter Stoner calculates the odds of Ezekiel's prophecies concerning Tyre occurring by chance. Remember the odds of dying in a fire are 1 in 40,000 – being hit by a baseball at a major league game happens to be 1 in 300,000 – getting struck by lightning, 1 in 2 million – winning the lotto, 1 in 4 million. But the odds of this prophecy coming true by accident is 1 in 75 million.

Chapter 26 is conclusive proof the book you hold in your hand was written by a God who dwells outside time - and has known the end from the beginning.

### Devotion Box - Why God Tired Of Tyre

Chapter 27 depicts the city of Tyre as a great ship built by wealth from all over the world. You might call the city of Tyre, the *Titanic of the Bible*. A great ship sinks. Tyre was a nautical nation – the ancient mariners. They sailed the seas and through trade became a rich nation. But with their riches came pride. Proverbs 6 tells us there are 6 things the Lord hates, and # 1 is “a proud look”. DL Moody said, “God sends no one away empty except those who are full of themselves.” Because of her pride God grew *tired of Tyre*.

It reminds me of Speedy Morris, basketball coach of LaSalle University. He was shaving one morning, when his wife ran into the room and told him he had a phone call from Sports Illustrated. He was thrilled about the prospect of national recognition for his program. Speedy got so excited he nicked himself shaving. But when he picked up the receiver the voice on the other end said, “For just 75 cents an issue you can get a one-year trial subscription.”

Guys, beware of pride! God tires of the man like Tyre - who's full of himself. Carl Sandburg once wrote, “The earth is strewn with the exploded bladders of the puffed up.” The proud and puffed are eventually cast down.

Devotion Box -  
Persistent  
Unfaithfulness