

**Ezekiel**  
**January 13, 2008**  
**Chapters 21-24, Emphasis 24**

**I. Chapter 21: Babylon the Sword of God**

Babylon, or more precisely Nebuchadnezzar, is the sword of God. The destruction of Israel is foreordained because of its sin; the Lord has selected to use Babylon as His tool to punish Israel. The Lord chooses to punish Israel before Rabbah or Ammon (note the two roads in verse 18). Yet Ammon continues to insult Jerusalem and its God, which is a bad move since it guarantees that Ammon will also be punished.

**II. Chapter 22: Sins of Israel and Its Implication**

Some of the horrible sins of Jerusalem, the primary city of Israel, are identified. This indicates how Israel has become useless (dross) to God and His work. The leaders of Israel are particularly at fault for having led the nation away from God. Of course, beginning in Chapter 20, Ezekiel has been speaking to the leadership in exile. Do you think that they are learning anything from Ezekiel's words?

**III. Chapter 23: Tale of Two Cities**

Chapter 16 discusses the orphan who grows up to be a harlot. This chapter appears to continue that line of thought. Oholah, or Samaria symbolic of the northern kingdom, means "her own tent." (Some suggest that that this name implies that God never recognized the worship set up by Jereboam in the northern kingdom.) Oholibah, or Jerusalem symbolic of the southern kingdom, means "my tent in her." Both names have tent in them (*Ohol*) and probably allude to the tent of meeting. The tent of meeting was where Moses would meet with the LORD; it was located outside the camp area.

From the information in the chapter, there does not appear to be much difference between the two cities. Both rebel against the LORD.

**IV. The End has Come!**

**Ezek 24:1-2**

**24:1 In the ninth year, in the tenth month on the tenth day, the word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, record this date, this very date, because the king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day.**

**NIV**

This is two years and five months since the time of his last dated message.  
The end is coming!

## V. Conclusion

**Ezek 24:3-5**

**3 Tell this rebellious house a parable and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "'Put on the cooking pot; put it on and pour water into it. 4 Put into it the pieces of meat, all the choice pieces — the leg and the shoulder. Fill it with the best of these bones; 5 take the pick of the flock. Pile wood beneath it for the bones; bring it to a boil and cook the bones in it. NIV**

Apparently five years of preaching had not yet registered on the Israelites.

They did not have a clue. The “cooking pot” alludes back to Ezek 11:3:

**3 They say, 'Will it not soon be time to build houses? This city is a cooking pot, and we are the meat.' NIV**

## VI. City of Bloodshed

**Ezek 24:6-8**

**6 "'For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "'Woe to the city of bloodshed, to the pot now encrusted, whose deposit will not go away! Empty it piece by piece without casting lots for them. 7 "'For the blood she shed is in her midst: She poured it on the bare rock; she did not pour it on the ground, where the dust would cover it. 8 To stir up wrath and take revenge I put her blood on the bare rock, so that it would not be covered. NIV**

The exact meaning is somewhat disputed, but what we know is that the inside of the pot is a waste material. Verse 7 shows that the blood of the city is there for all to see; it is not hidden. Verse 8 might refer to what happened in each of the three waves of conquest of Judah in 606 BC, 597 BC, and 586 BC. All would have been terrible. The blood remaining uncovered shows that the judgment is still due.

## VII. God's Patience is at an End

**Ezek 24:13-14**

**13 "'Now your impurity is lewdness. Because I tried to cleanse you but you would not be cleansed from your impurity, you will not be clean again until my wrath against you has subsided. 14 "'I the LORD have spoken. The time has come for me to act. I will not hold back; I will not have pity, nor will I relent. You will be judged according to your conduct and your actions, declares the Sovereign LORD.'" NIV**

Because of their fondness for lewdness as an example of their sin, the LORD will take longer continue to purify them. Since the LORD will wait no longer, they are to be pitied. Also since the city will remain unclean as a result of what has been done in it, it will be uninhabited for a number of years.

## VIII. Ezekiel's Delight Taken Away

**Ezek 24:15-18**

**15 The word of the LORD came to me: 16 "Son of man, with one blow I am about to take away from you the delight of your eyes. Yet do not lament or weep or shed any tears. 17 Groan quietly; do not mourn for the dead. Keep your turban fastened and your sandals on your feet; do not cover the lower part of your face or eat the customary food [of mourners]." 18 So I spoke to the people in the morning, and in the evening my wife died. The next morning I did as I had been commanded.**

**NIV**

The delight of the Israelite's eyes was Jerusalem; the delight of Ezekiel's eyes was his wife. It is God's will that both are to be taken away. How are we to react when we know exactly what God's will happens to be...and we do not like it? How do you think Ezekiel felt about his wife being used as object lesson?

This is a scary part of Scripture. It demonstrates how difficult it is to do what God has determined. The deportees are in a horrible situation; they might deserve it, but it is horrible for them. The loss of Jerusalem was as difficult for them to take as the loss of Ezekiel's wife was to him. Yet, he is commanded not to follow the usual convention of mourning, but must proceed as though nothing happened. He is acting as a model for the deportees and their loss.

Even with his wife dying, Ezekiel goes about his ministry to the people. He probably told them that she would die, which would have focused their interest when she did.

## **IX. God's Will**

**Ezek 24:19-24**

**19 Then the people asked me, "Won't you tell us what these things have to do with us?" 20 So I said to them, "The word of the LORD came to me: 21 Say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am about to desecrate my sanctuary — the stronghold in which you take pride, the delight of your eyes, the object of your affection. The sons and daughters you left behind will fall by the sword. 22 And you will do as I have done. You will not cover the lower part of your face or eat the customary food [of mourners]. 23 You will keep your turbans on your heads and your sandals on your feet. You will not mourn or weep but will waste away because of your sins and groan among yourselves. 24 Ezekiel will be a sign to you; you will do just as he has done. When this happens, you will know that I am the Sovereign LORD.'**

**NIV**

Verse 19 shows that apparently, the people have learned that Ezekiel's actions have a meaning, even if they do not understand the explanation or believe it.

The comparison is made between the wife and the city. Because it is the LORD's will that this should happen to Jerusalem, they should react the same way that Ezekiel has been ordered to behave.

Although Ezekiel has been prophesizing against Jerusalem and the sanctuary, it was also a major loss to him. In other words, he has two major losses that he must deal with. For Ezekiel to have stated Verse 22 shows how well he obeyed the LORD. Apparently his feelings were as strong for his wife as the exiles' felt for the city.

## **X. It's Over**

**Ezek 24:25-27**

**25 "And you, son of man, on the day I take away their stronghold, their joy and glory, the delight of their eyes, their heart's desire, and their sons and daughters as well— 26 on that day a fugitive will come to tell you the news. 27 At that time your mouth will be opened; you will speak with him and will no longer be silent. So you will be a sign to them, and they will know that I am the LORD."**

**NIV**

The ending of Ezekiel's silence indicates also a change coming from the LORD. The city will fall, but eventually the Israelites will be allowed to return to it. Ezekiel would be allowed to move again among the people and to encourage them. He would be allowed to intercede for the people with the LORD. Since his first vision, Ezekiel has only been allowed to speak what the LORD tells him.

## **XI. First Part of the Book**

The first part of the book of Ezekiel is over. It has been primarily about the coming destruction of Jerusalem. It has been a message of God's will that goes against what the deportees want to hear. From it, we learn the patience of God but that He does bring justice.

## **XII. Matching**

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|----------------------------|-----------------|
| ___1. The bloody city      | A. Assyria      |
| ___2. The northern capital | B. Babylonia    |
| ___3. The northern tribes  | C. Chaldeans    |
| ___4. The southern kingdom | D. Divine wrath |
| ___5. Debauched Arabs      | E. Jerusalem    |
| ___6. A pagan god          | F. Molech       |
| ___7. Aholah's captor      | G. Aholah       |
| ___8. Aholiah's captor     | H. Aholiah      |
| ___9. The Babylonians      | I. Sabeans      |
| ___10. Fire and fury       | J. Samaria      |