



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Ezekiel, Daniel Sermon Series
Supports Session 3: "Judges"
Sermon Title: "When the Lord Shocks Us"
Passage: Ezekiel 24:1-27

Connection to Ezekiel 20:1-14

God judges those who reject Him as Lord. He judges His people so we will turn from our spiritual complacency and surrender to Him.

Introduction/Opening

Some dates are etched in our memories because of the horrible nature of that day. It could have been a national tragedy, act of nature, or a personal loss. There is no way we will forget that date.

The Lord gave Ezekiel a specific date for his prophecies of judgment. His people would be able to recall that date once they lived through the shocking experiences associated with it. The shocking events would open their eyes to their need for Him.

As we examine these shocking events, we do well to keep in mind that the Lord provided the record for our benefit as well. The Lord can use our examination of the judgment spoken of by Ezekiel to draw us out of our spiritual complacency.

Outline

1. A pot that boils over (vv. 1-14)
 - a. According to Ezekiel 11:3, God's people underscored their arrogance that had lulled themselves into complacency. They told Ezekiel that they considered Jerusalem to be a pot, and they saw themselves as the meat inside it. Just as a pot protected the meat from the fire, they believed that Jerusalem would protect them from ruin. In response, the Lord told Ezekiel to shock His people by filling a pot with choice meat. It would be cooked well and then taken from the pot indiscriminately. Then the fire under the pot would turn into a blaze. The scorching flame would reveal the rust in the pot that had been hidden there all along. Likewise, God's people lived in certain danger of His judgment because of the lingering unwillingness to repent.
 - b. The image of the boiling pot warns believers who have become arrogant. When we fill ourselves to the brim with selfish pride, we tend to believe that the Lord protects us and provides for us even though we refuse to walk with Him in humility. Our arrogance may deceive us into believing that humility doesn't matter anymore. In response to our arrogance, the Lord startles us with the actions that He has to take so we will humble

ourselves and return to Him. While His actions may shock us, they're intended to get our attention and bring us to our knees in fresh humility before Him.

2. A wife who dies suddenly (vv. 15-19)

- a. Apparently, Ezekiel adored his wife, and the announcement of her death must have come as quite a shock to him. Ezekiel recalled that sad day. That morning he left home, and he talked with people who came his way for the remainder of the day. When he returned home that evening, she died. The Lord instructed him to keep his sorrow to himself. The customary display of grief would have been expected, but Ezekiel followed the Lord's instruction. His odd behavior shocked everyone. They wondered why he refused to grieve.
- b. Ezekiel's strange silence in the face of grief brings home the reality of the Lord's ways among His people. When tragedy strikes, the Lord may lead us to respond in ways that others interpret to be unusual or strange. That's when we can talk with them about the Lord.

3. A nation that's destroyed completely (vv. 20-27)

- a. The Lord gave Ezekiel the opportunity to prepare His people. Like Ezekiel, they would encounter a shocking tragedy. Grief would overwhelm them on the day when their beloved temple would be destroyed. Also like Ezekiel, they would need to respond to the destruction of Jerusalem with settled certainty that they had seen the Lord's hand in what had happened. The Lord knew that in due time, they would turn to Ezekiel in search of answers. He commanded Ezekiel to remain silent until that dreadful day came. Only then would he be allowed to share the Lord's perspective on the tragedy that had shocked them. As a result of that shocking experience, they would then be able to grasp the depth of their sin and their need to turn to the Lord.
- b. When we step away from a growing relationship with the Lord, we tend to turn a deaf ear to Him. We won't listen to Him until we're jostled out of our self-satisfaction. A crisis can get our attention. That's when we're ready to listen to Him. That's also when we can help others who have been shocked into an awareness that they need to pay attention to Him. Complacent students begin to listen to their teachers only after they're shocked by the discovery that they failed a major exam. By the same token, self-satisfied believers turn to the Lord once they've been shocked to see that they have drifted from Him.

Conclusion

The Lord uses startling episodes to get our attention so we can surrender to Him. How have you reacted to them? How has He used them to get your attention so you will say "yes" to Christ?

Argile Smith serves as the pastor of Parkway Baptist Church, Biloxi, MS. He graduated from William Carey College (BA) and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (MDiv, PhD).