



EZEKIEL: *Death and Resurrection*

A Bible Study with John Oswalt

EZEKIEL 4 AND 5

Background: There is a sense in which chapters 4–11 form a unit (after the commissioning in chapter 1–3). They establish the point that Jerusalem will be destroyed, and that the destruction definitely will occur because far from having a holy temple there to protect them, the temple is hopelessly corrupt, as are its worshippers.

- 390 days would correspond to the time span between the death of Solomon (930 BC), when the northern kingdom, Israel, was formed, and the return from Babylon in approximately 540 BC. This suggests (especially in view of the 40 days assigned to Judah (586–536 BC), that God viewed the entire existence of the northern kingdom as captivity away from Jerusalem.
 - The term translated “judgments” (KJV), “ordinances” (NASB, NRSV), “rules” (ESV), or “regulations” (NLT) is one we have talked about in other studies. It comes from the idea of “order” (as opposed to “chaos”) with uses ranging from patterns to customs to practices to agreed-upon standards to expected behaviors to punishments inflicted for infringing on those expected behaviors.
 - An “abomination” (5:9, 11) is something contrary to the created order. For instance, an idol is an abomination, because creatures were never meant to be worshipped. Likewise, a father eating a son (5:10) would be an abomination. Abominations result in more abominations.
 - In Ezekiel 5:13 we have the first of some 50 “Then you will know that I am Yahweh” statements in the book of Ezekiel, reminiscent of that same recurring statement in the book of Exodus. Since they had not learned it through deliverance, they were going to have to learn it through judgement.
1. How many different “acted-out parables” do you find in chapters 3 and 4? What are they? What is their significance according to Ezekiel 3:3? What is the significance of that term considering the Exodus?
 2. Notice that verses 4, 5, and 6 tell us this lying on his side was not merely a demonstration. What is this pointing to?
 3. Imagine Ezekiel’s anguish over what the third sign entailed. Why would God do this to an especially called servant? Can you think of another prophet who was called to do something frankly immoral? What is God doing?

4. In some ways the fourth sign was the most degrading of all, because it deprived Ezekiel of his status as a respected man. Of all of them it is most nearly a parable because it will be explained in the following verses. (See 5:11–12)

5. What is implied by “set her among the nations” (5:5)? Instead, what has Jerusalem done? In fact, according to verse 7, what more have they done? What does all this say to the church?

6. As a result, what terrible thing has happened (according to v. 8)? What is the necessary result of that, according to verses 9–10?

7. If we believe that Yahweh is good, gracious, and forgiving, how are we to explain the intensity of fury and rage that we see in verses 13–17?

8. How are verses 14–15 the mirror image of verse 5? What do they tell us about the order and symmetry of God’s universe?