Preventing for Survival
Ezekiel 12:1--15:1-8

The Predicament of the Exiles (12:1-2)

The description of the people ... “Son of man, you are living in the midst of a rebellious house…” (12:1-2).

The dullness of their senses ... “… they have eyes to see but they do not see and ears to hear but they do not hear” (12:2); when people resist God’s message long enough their hearts become hardened; physically they see and hear but they are spiritually blind to the truth and deaf to God’s Word.

The exiles are watching Ezekiel put a survival pack together; seven times in verses 3-7 you find the statement “as they watch” or “in their sight;” Ezekiel is giving a demonstration on survival training; they look on and ask, “What are you doing?” (12:9).

When people become rebellious in their ways God hardens their hearts (Romans 11:25; 2 Corinthians 4:4).

How do we understand this? Man on his own chooses to rebel against God; when God has had enough He turns them over to their evil ways; Satan takes over from there by blinding their minds so they cannot hear the truth (Romans 1:24,26, 28).
The Preparation for Survival (12:3--28)

The exhibition on survival training

*By packing his bags... “... prepare your belongings for captivity...” (12:3-16); Ezekiel is to put a survival pack together in the daylight for all to see; he is pretending to go into captivity; he places the backpack outside the door of his home.*

When evening comes he is to make a hole in the wall of his house and escape at night; he was to cover his face so he could not see the land he was leaving.

The meaning of the drama... “I have made you a sign to the house of Israel” (12:6,11); in verses 10-14 he is to tell them, “I am a sign to you. As I have done, so shall it be done to them, they shall be carried away into captivity;” the prince referred to is Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar’s puppet king; the sins of Israel are narrowed down to who he was.

When Nebuchadnezzar came in his 3rd invasion, Zedekiak packed a survival kit, disguised himself, dug a hole in the wall of his house and escaped into the night; he was captured, taken to Riblah where he witnessed the execution of his sons, after which they gouged out his eyes and took him to Babylon where he died (2 Kings 25:1-8; Ezekiel 12:13).

The message from the drama...

1. The desired response... “It may be that they will consider, though they are a rebellious house (12:3b); God has not given up on them ( see 2 Peter 3:9).

2. The deceived reaction... They are a rebellious house, which has eyes to see, but does not see and ears to hear but does not hear...(12:2).

3. The decreed recognition... “Then they shall know that I am the LORD” (12:16).

*By trembling while eating and drinking... “Son of man, eat your bread with quaking and drink your water with trembling and anxiety...” (12:17-20); he was eating starvation rations as a severe famine and pestilence was to come (12:19). The meaning of Ezekiel’s quaking breakfast...
1. The fear of the people... The people of Jerusalem had fear because of the violence of the leaders (12:19).

2. The food of the people (12:19; see Matthew 4:4).

3. The frailty of the people... Ezekiel shows weakness of the people when he eats his food by quaking (12:18); divine strength can be communicated through weakness (2 Corinthians 12:10b); sometimes God has to break us before he can use us.

4. The favor on the partial... “But I will spare a few of their men from the sword, from famine, and from pestilence....” (12:16); Israel’s enemies have bitten the dust, the Jews still live and Israel still exists (Genesis 12:1-3; 13; 14-16; Amos 9:14-15).

It is wonderful to believe in a sovereign God; even in dire times for Judah, God did not forget the remnant (Lamentations 3:22-23).


1. The message of God is for the future... “...what is the proverb you have about the land of Israel, which says, the days are prolonged...” (12:22a; see 26-27); the excuse: “We have plenty of time.”

We hear the same excuse today; “I've got plenty of time to do my thing; when I get older and have done all I want to do, then I'll come to Christ” (see 2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7-8).

God’s response to the proverb was, “I will lay the proverb to rest... I speak, and the word which I shall speak will come to pass; it will no more be postponed...” (12:23-25).

2. The message of God is foolishness... “and every vision fails” (12:22b); the excuse: “They are all phony prophets.”

The Bible was written by men and is no more trustworthy than ancient mythology (1 Corinthians 1:18) some will never accept the gospel because they cannot comprehend the supernatural.
3. The message of God is not fair... “When a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch My hand against it...” (14:13-14); the excuse: “We are protected by our goodness and that of others.”

People say, “I am a good person and I don’t need Jesus” (see Acts 4:12)

4. The message of God is not for the favored... In chapter 15 Ezekiel tells the parable of the outcast vine; Judah is like a vine planted among the trees; the wood of the vine will burn like that of the trees; so Judah will be like fire for fuel and the land will be desolate for they have been unfaithful (15:1-8; verses 6-8); the excuse: “We are a privileged people and God will not bring judgment on us.”

The Jews saw themselves as God’s chosen; God will not harm His own; yet they are called “grapes of gall” (Deuteronomy 32:32; “wild grapes” (Isaiah 5:4); an “empty vine” (Hosea 10:1).

Today people may think they are privileged because of their position, or influence, or fame; therefore because of who they are they are indestructible; God cannot touch them.


*The delusion of the false prophets (13:1-23)*... These false prophets carried two false messages:

1. Their message of peace (13:10)... They have seduced the people saying “Peace” when there is no peace; before Christ returns people will be saying “peace and safety” but destruction will come suddenly (1 Thessalonians 5:3).

2. Their message of parapsychology (13:17-23)... Prophetesses were prominent in the land with their magical charms; people were having their future told by evil spirits working through mediums; God is against their occult practices (13:20-23); the occult is big business today and is called “the doctrines of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1).

Jerusalem fell when male prophets were preaching “peace and safety” and women were practicing divination.

*The deception of the elders of Tel Abib (14:1-11)*... These elders come to Ezekiel’s house for a talk; there are 4 lessons we learn:
1. Their repetition of evil... “these men have set up idols in their hearts…” (14:1-3); once in captivity they continue the same practice that put them there in the first place.

2. Their request for God’s help... They come to Ezekiel and ask Him to pray for them, even while these elders were involved in idolatry; God says to Ezekiel, “Should I let Myself be inquired of at all by them?” (14:3); it is a hypocritical request for prayer; refusing to repent they still seek comfort from God; normally God would not answer their request (Isaiah 59:2); in this case He makes an exception in that He is still trying to capture the hearts of His people (14:5).

3. Their requirement to repent... “Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Repent, turn away from your idols, and turn your faces away from your abominations”...” (14:6); God put a condition on their request--- Repent.

4. Their retribution from God... They refused to repent, so God said: “I will set MY face against that man and make him a sign and a prophet, and I will cut him off from the midst of My people. Then you shall know that I am the LORD…” (14:7-11); God’s judgment is going to fall on this hypocrisy; the lesson: When the idolater turns aside it is sin, but when God turns aside it is death.

Everyone needs to prepare for survival; I'm not talking about survival from an earthquake or natural disaster or an enemy attack; I'm talking about the coming judgment of God on the world; I'm talking about the Day of Judgment when everyone will stand before the Lord and give an account of their life; we all need to make some personal introspection and ask ourselves: “What idols do I have that need to be removed from the shelf of my heart?” Then ask God to cleanse your heart in true repentance; the only Life Savor we have is Jesus Christ; let’s confess Him today-- and every day-- as our Lord and Savior. Amen