EZEKIEL 24

The Rusted Pot and the Prophet's Loss

> *"So I spoke to the people in the morning, and in the evening my wife died. And in the morning I did as I was commanded."*
> EZEKIEL 24:18

Where Ezekiel has brought us

1. This chapter carries one of the most exact dates in Ezekiel: “in the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth of the month” (v1), counted from King Jehoiachin’s exile, so about January 588 B.C.

2. Chapter 24 closes the first half of Ezekiel.

The Day the Siege Began

Write the name of the day: the king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem

EZEKIEL 24:2

"Son of man, write the name of the day, this very day. The king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik calls this date 'nation-changing and life-changing' and compares it to the way people remember 9/11. Ezekiel, hundreds of miles away in Babylon, is told the very day the siege began.

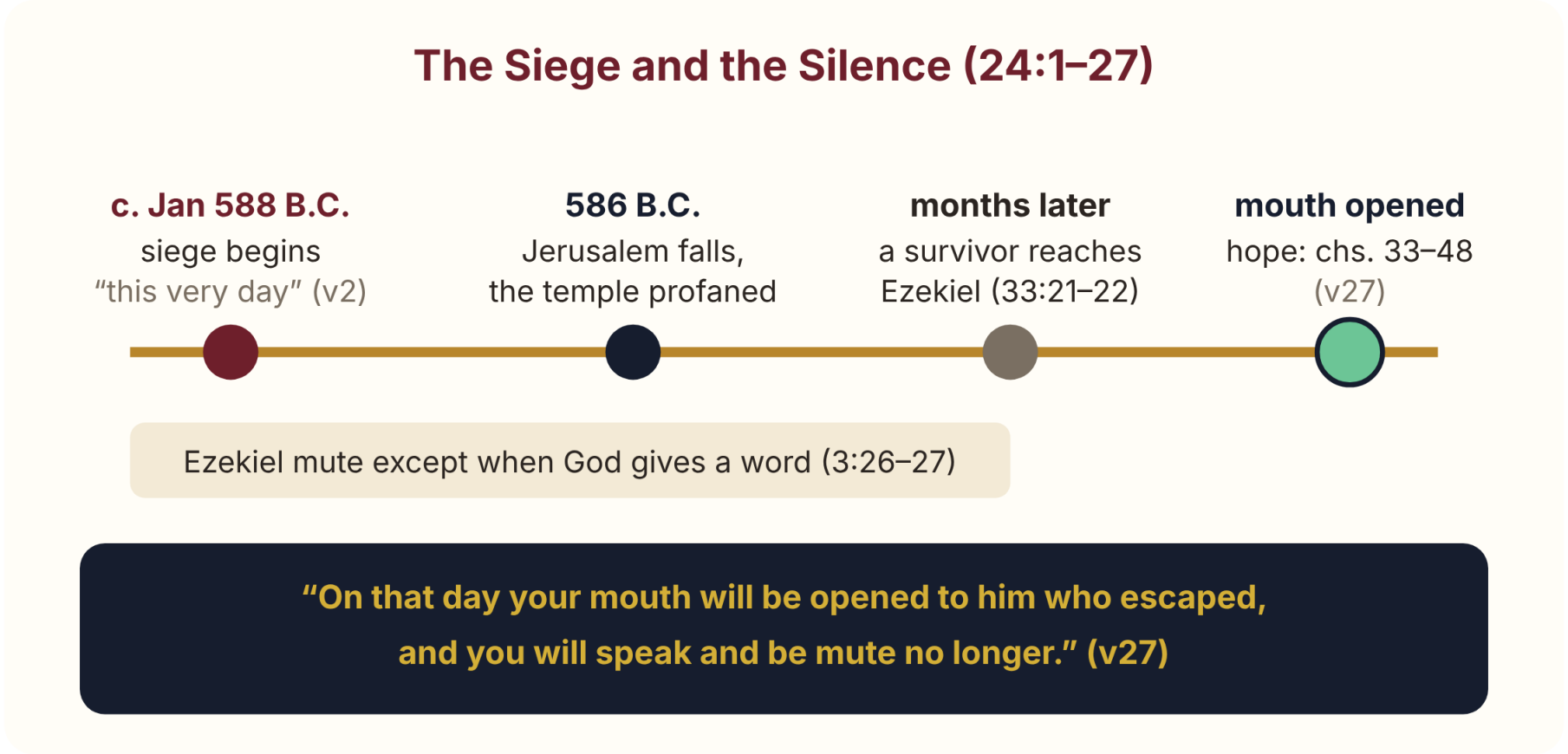
WHAT IT MEANS

God tells Ezekiel, "Son of man, write the name of the day, this very day" (v2). There were no phones or couriers fast enough to carry the news from Jerusalem to Babylon.

Laid siege (סָמַךְ)
SAMAK · "LEAN UPON"

Samak means to lean upon or lay hold of. Here it describes an army pressing its weight against a city: "The king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day" (v2).

From the Day of Siege to the Opened Mouth (24:1–2, 25–27)



Ezekiel writes down the day the siege begins; when a survivor finally arrives with news of the city's fall, his mouth is opened and his message turns to hope.

The Rusted Pot

Fill the pot, boil it hard, empty it, then set it on the coals until the rust burns off

EZEKIEL 24:6

'Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "Woe to the bloody city, To the pot in which there is rust And whose rust has not gone out of it! Take out of it piece after piece, Without making a choice.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik passes on Wright: 'Jerusalem is the cooking pot, and its people are the meat that is to be cooked.'

WHAT IT MEANS

Jerusalem's people had boasted that they were the choice meat in the pot, safe inside the walls (11:3). God takes their picture and turns it.

Rust (חֶלְאָה)

CHEL'AH · "RUST, CORROSION"

Chel'ah means rust or corrosion; the KJV has 'scum.' It appears in verses 6, 11 and 12.

The Pot and the Sign (24:3–24)

Sign 1: The Rusted Pot (vv3–14)

vv3–5	v6	vv9–12
		
Fill and boil	**Empty it, no one spared**	**Burn off the rust**

“Because I would have cleansed you, Yet you are not clean” (v13)

Sign 2: Ezekiel as a Sign (vv15–24)

Ezekiel (vv16–18)	Israel (vv21–23)
his wife, “the desire of your eyes”	the sanctuary, “the desire of your eyes”
taken suddenly, “with a blow”	profaned, and the children fall
“Groan silently” — no public rites	“you will groan to one another”

Two final signs: a rusted pot burned empty on the coals, and Ezekiel’s sudden loss mirrored in Israel’s loss of the temple.

The Desire of His Eyes

God takes Ezekiel's wife with a blow, forbids public mourning, and Ezekiel obeys

EZEKIEL 24:16

"Son of man, behold, I am about to take from you the desire of your eyes with a blow; but you shall not mourn and you shall not weep, and your tears shall not come.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik says the phrase "the desire of your eyes" 'touchingly' shows how dear she was to him, and Poole, in Guzik, says it 'certainly refers to the amiableness of her disposition.'

WHAT IT MEANS

God warns Ezekiel ahead of time: "I am about to take from you the desire of your eyes with a blow" (v16).

Desire (מַחְמַד)
MACHMAD · "DELIGHT, PRECIOUS THING"

Machmad is a delight, a precious thing. God calls Ezekiel's wife "the desire of your eyes" (v16).

The Sign Explained

As Ezekiel lost his wife, Israel would lose the temple — the desire of their eyes

EZEKIEL 24:19

The people said to me, "Will you not tell us what these things that you are doing mean for us?"

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik draws the line from the prophet to the people: 'As Ezekiel's wife suddenly died, so the sanctuary would suddenly and soon perish.'

WHAT IT MEANS

The people ask, "Will you not tell us what these things that you are doing mean for us?"

Sign (מוֹפֵת)

MOPHETH · "SIGN, OBJECT LESSON"

Mopheth is a sign, a wonder, an object lesson. God says, "Thus Ezekiel will be a sign to you; according to all that he has done you will do" (v24).

The Mouth Opened

When a survivor brings the news, Ezekiel will be mute no longer

EZEKIEL 24:25

'As for you, son of man, will it not be on the day when I take from them their stronghold, the joy of their pride, the desire of their eyes and their heart's delight, their sons and their daughters,

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik notes that the survivor arrived some months after the city fell (33:21–22), and after that Ezekiel's ministry turned toward hope.

WHAT IT MEANS

God tells Ezekiel what will happen "on the day when I take from them their stronghold" (v25): a survivor will escape and bring him the news (v26). On that day his mouth will be opened (v27).

Mute (אָלַם)

ALAM · "BE BOUND, SILENT"

Alam means to be bound, to be dumb or silent. Since his call, Ezekiel had been unable to speak except when God gave him a message (3:26–27).

What to carry from this chapter

1

God marks the calendar.

Ezekiel wrote down the day the siege began, hundreds of miles away (v2; 2 Kgs 25:1).

2

Rust, not scum.

Guzik, quoting Feinberg, says the word in verse 6 is rightly ‘rust’: corruption soaked into the metal.

3

Blood left uncovered.

The Law said to cover spilled blood with dust (Lev 17:13); Jerusalem shed it openly, so God left it as a witness.

4

I would have cleansed you.

Block, in Guzik, ties verse 13 to the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah, which never reached the heart.

More to carry

5

The desire of his eyes.

Machmad (H4261) shows how precious Ezekiel's wife was to him, and the same word names the temple.

6

Sorrow allowed, show forbidden.

Guzik, quoting Feinberg, notes Ezekiel was not forbidden to grieve, only to make a public display.

7

Obedience the next morning.

"And in the morning I did as I was commanded" (v18).

8

The great encourager.

Smith, in Guzik: once his mouth was opened, the prophet of judgment became a prophet of hope (v27).

Talk it through

1. Why did God want Ezekiel to write down the exact day the siege began?

2. What does the rust in the pot represent, and why did scrubbing fail to remove it?

3. How do you hold together Ezekiel's deep love for his wife and his obedience the next morning?

4. What "desire of your eyes" — even a good thing — are you tempted to trust more than God?

5. What hope does the promise of an opened mouth give to someone living through a season of silence or loss?

CLOSING

On the day the siege began, God knew it and marked it. He burned the rust out of a pot that would not come clean, and He asked His prophet to carry a loss no man would choose. But the silence ended, the mouth was opened, and the message turned to hope — because with God, judgment is never the last word for those who turn to Him.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

O·I·A study, slides and reflection journal: see the Ezekiel study page.