

NOVEMBER 14

Ezekiel 29-30

I was caught off guard by this reading. I've been reading like this since 1995, and what I read today sent me thinking. I finally saw something that was right in the text, but I had never paid attention to it. I'll mention it when we get there.

Ezekiel 29

Vs. 1-12 According to 2 Kings 25:1-3, the siege of Jerusalem began on 9.10.10, that is, the ninth year (of Nebuchadnezzar's reign) in the tenth month on the tenth day. The city would be taken on 11.4.9, exactly a year and a half later. Notice when this judgment is given. 10.10.12 would be the tenth year in the tenth month on the twelfth day (January 5, 587 B.C.). The siege had been going for a year and there were only six months to go.

Vs. 6-9 Notice why this punishment is promised. Egypt was one of those nations that enticed Judah to break off their relationship with Babylon. Egypt promised them protection in spite of what God told the people through the prophets.

Vs. 9-10 It was typical back then to see the king as a little god or the god's man on earth. You see this as far in history as Rome, and I tend to think that the Roman Catholic Church borrowed the idea with the pope (especially in light of Matt. 23:9). God always opposed this kind of arrogance, especially since He is the Creator.

Also, keep underlining *know that I am the Lord*. Even as this phrase is used in this section, it raises some interesting questions.

Vs. 13-16 Egypt would also be taken into captivity and allowed to return after 40 years. Their return would coincide with the return of Israel. Notice too, that they would never again be a world power.

Vs. 17-20 This is the defeat of Egypt. Notice the time marker. It is now 27.1.1 (April 26, 571 B.C.). This is 16 years later and still a couple of years (about 568 B.C.) before Nebuchadnezzar set up his throne over those rocks that Jeremiah buried. This is what really got me thinking. When Jeremiah buried those stones in Jeremiah 43:10, he told the people who were in rebellion that God would bring Nebuchadnezzar to Egypt to destroy it and to judge them, but that judgment wouldn't come for another 15-18 years. They must have thought that Jeremiah (and God) were nuts as the years kept slipping away and nothing happened. That is almost the same amount of time from the first time Nebuchadnezzar entered Jerusalem, mildly looting the temple and taking Daniel and others as prisoners, to the destruction of Jerusalem. It just made me think how patient God is, on the one hand, and how He uses time and silence to build and prove and test our faith (or lack of faith) in His Word.

After Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem in 586, he went back to work on Tyre. Neb never could defeat the city, but it did surrender in about 572. Since there must have been an agreement for peace, and since the city fathers had shipped off the wealth of the city to an undisclosed location, Nebuchadnezzar had nothing to pay his troops. So, they went to Egypt. Neb had already broken the power of Egypt, so it was an easy victory and the place was full of riches (gold, silver, iPads, flat screen TVs, etc.) for his men.

V. 21 It is hard to fully understand what this verse is saying. The mention of a *horn* usually has something to do with a deliverer or king. One guess would be that when Zerubbabel (of the house of David) led the first group of exiles back to Israel, he read from Ezekiel when they arrived in Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 30

Vs. 1-4 These verses have a Tribulation/ end-times feeling and might have some connection to v. 21. Egypt will receive millennial blessing.

Vs. 5-19 Back to God's judgment on Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar. Notice vs. 8 and 19. There are still two more to come in this chapter.

Vs. 20-26 This would be about April 29, 587. During the siege of Jerusalem, Egypt challenged Nebuchadnezzar and Neb left Jerusalem for a short time. If you remember, it was during this time in Jerusalem that the wealthy reclaimed their slaves. But Neb "broke the arms" of Egypt and returned to finish up with Jerusalem, knowing that Egypt wouldn't be a threat any longer.

Hebrews 11:32-12:13

I guess the question in this section is, "How long do you pursue God in faith?" The answer is found in all the faithful examples of the lives to which the author is about to refer.

Hebrews 11:32-40

Vs. 32-39 You'll notice that vs. 32-34 seem positive and the rest seem negative. But if you look into the lives of David and the prophets, there was a lot of "negative" for them to endure too, as they followed in faith.

V. 37 Tradition has it that Isaiah was sawn in two by King Manasseh.

V. 38 This wandering could have been David or Elijah or others or all of them together.

V. 39 This is something Jesus mentioned, that many prophets and kings longed to see what the disciples saw, but didn't see it.

V. 40 The fulfillment was in Jesus, and we have tasted the first fruit of this blessing, which is also the fulfillment of their faith. They held on through long, difficult times, following in faith, living and dying for their faith. Obviously the writer and the Spirit are saying that these people (and we too) ought to do the same.

Hebrews 12:1-13

Vs. 1-2 The running of this race in faith *with endurance* is defined and modeled by our Savior. If you unpack these verses you know what a disciple is supposed to do on earth. What would you say a disciple is supposed to do?

Vs. 3-4 Jesus is the model of living, and living by faith. The question of "how long" is answered in Jesus: to the death. The Hebrew readers of this letter had not yet gone that far.

Vs. 5-11 The word *discipline* means "child training," so this isn't strictly punitive. It is comprehensive training as any parent would do in teaching and nurturing a child. Notice the alternating examples of our earthly fathers and God.

V. 10 This *holiness* isn't just "purity," but also being set apart to God and His purpose.

V. 11 It is OK not to feel good when God is teaching us. Just as we learned in Job, it is knowing the goodness of the Lord as revealed in His Word, and knowing He is totally wise that gives us the endurance to hold on in faith. Job did it. All the people in Hebrews 11 did it. Jesus did it. Therefore, the Hebrews (and we) should do it too.

V. 12-13 This is a warning. If a person allows a weak faith to wreck them, their hurt can grow deeper, to the place of shipwrecking their faith and taking them away from God's rest and blessing, possibly for the duration of their time on earth. We've seen this expressed by the writer in other ways. Paul and Jesus said the same things.

Psalm 112

This is a great psalm and must have been written by someone who had gone through deep trials and darkness, but endured by faith and proved God to be true to His Word. This song, and its confidence, is the result.

Vs. 1 This sets the tone and subject of the psalm. This is about a person *who fears the Lord* and lives in His commandments. Psalm 1 and Psalm 119 give the idea of always meditating on the Word.

Vs. 2-3 The person will have and leave a godly heritage. Notice that v. 3 is a refrain in this psalm that marks the changing of the subject.

Vs. 4-6 This person also brings God's truth, and with it, all the character of God, His graciousness, mercy and love. He brings God's justice. He is remembered forever.

Vs. 7-9 His heart is secure and he is unwavering, helping those around him. He will be honored .

V. 10 This is also kind of like how Psalm 1 ends.

This is a lot of encouragement to stay in God's Word. That is exactly what we're doing.

Proverbs 27:17

Sounds like a great title for a book. This assumes that the men are godly men. This is exactly what Jesus meant by making disciples. But, He also cautioned that a disciple is not above his teacher. We ourselves need to become the kind of iron that can sharpen other iron. That's what we're trying to do here.