

The Watchman #4
A Four-Act Dramatic Tragedy

Word

Scripture Reference

Ezekiel 4-7

Discussion Questions

1. Was there a musical or dramatic act that has left a deep impression on you? Why did it do so?
2. From previous chapters we learned that one of the limitations God put on Ezekiel was He made Ezekiel mute. Ezekiel could only speak when God wanted to speak to His people. Read Ezekiel 4-7. These chapters tell us of four dramatic acts that God asked Ezekiel to do to convey to His people that He would soon punish them because of their rebelliousness:
 - a. **ACT #1: Laying of Brink (4:1-3) – Fact of a Siege.** Ezekiel acted out the rise and fall of Jerusalem before it actually happened. God gave Ezekiel specific instructions about what to do and say, and how to do and say it. What instruction did God tell Ezekiel to do (v. 1-3)? Would God listen to the Israelites when they cry for help during the siege? God had enough of their rebelliousness and so He allowed the Babylonians to besiege them. Discuss how this can be a warning if you are tempted to test God's patience.
 - b. **ACT #2: Laying on Side (v. 4-8) – Length of the Siege.** Ezekiel was restrained a few hours a day, not being able to flip to the other side. His actions symbolically portrayed the fate of Jerusalem. Ezekiel lay on his left side for 390 days to show that Israel would be punished for 390 years; then he lay on his right side for 40 days to show that Judah would be punished for 40 years. How does God's warnings of the consequences of

sins communicate to you? Share how a warning from God's Word had kept you from committing a grievous wrongdoing.

- c. **ACT #3: Eating Unclean Food (4:9-17) – Brutality of the Siege.** Ezekiel had to prepare food while lying down. The amount of food he was allowed to eat was very little, which signified the very little food during the siege. Then the food was to be cooked over dried human excrement as fuel, which was very offensive to a prophet like him. God allowed him to use cow excrement instead. Using excrement as fuel to cook food was an act of condemnation to Israelites (v. 13), because they would be eating defiled food. This shows that they would be driven out to the land of foreigners and eating their food would make them ceremonially unclean. How do you think it would have affected them as Jews? In your context, why do people call themselves Christians when they pick and choose what to follow from the Bible instead of following the entire Bible? Discuss why it is easy to say, "I am a Christian" yet live a life that doesn't represent a Christ-follower.
 - d. **ACT #4: Shaved Hair (ch. 5:1-4; 9-12) – Results of the Siege.** God told Ezekiel to shave his head and beard and then to divide the hair into three parts, symbolizing what was going to happen to the people in Jerusalem. The few strands of hair that Ezekiel put in his garment symbolized the small remnant of faithful people whom God would preserve (v. 3-4). Discuss what these acts of God tell you about the character of God. How should it guide you in your walk with Him?
3. These passages also gives us three takeaway lessons that we should learn:
 - a. **Judgment is meant to right a wrong (ch. 5:5-8, 13).** God disciplines His people to draw us back to Him. He disciplines the ones He loves. He will continue to discipline until you listen. Discuss how punishment or discipline can right a wrong in a family, work, or school situation. Share how God had corrected you to enable you to rectify something that you have done wrong.
 - b. **Judgment is meant to humble (ch. 5:14-15).** A loving God disciplines His people to humble them so that they will no longer be prideful, lest God's judgment continues in their life.

Discuss how proud people don't learn humbleness until they have suffered or have been disciplined.

- c. **Judgment can come in any form (ch. 5:16-17).** When God judges, he has an entire arsenal at His disposal. Discuss the many ways God could discipline His people in order to call their attention. Are Christians immune to the consequences of sin? What does 1 John 5:16 say could happen to a Christian as the consequence of his or her sin? How could this be avoided?

Walk

God has been very patient with His people, but they remained rebellious and chose to do what was evil. They did not heed the prophets' warnings. They were supposed to be a light to their neighboring countries but lived worse than most of them. God then communicated to His disobedient people in very dramatic acts through Ezekiel how He would judge them to right a wrong, to humble them, and to make them aware that His judgment comes in many forms. As a Christian, you are privileged to have a personal relationship with Christ. How are you living differently from those who don't have this kind of privilege? Are you representing Jesus Christ well by how you live your life?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for showing us in Your Word the consequences of sin. That You, being our righteous God, will not allow sin to go unpunished. Thank you that it is because of Your great love for us that you want to correct us. Thank you that through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross we are able to escape Your full wrath for sin. May you help us live humbly before you and to recognize it when we are entertaining sin or living with it in our lives. Thank you that we can live a victorious life through Christ. In Jesus Name, Amen.