

HOMILETICAL LEARNING FROM EZEKIEL

Introduction

We as preachers have each been given certain gifts and abilities to aid us in our preaching and teaching of the Word. In addition to this, homiletics is the art of preaching, which reminds us that this is a skill or art that we can develop over the time of our work for Him. Naturally we learn more of this skill through the Word as we consider how others gave the message to the people.

Who would you say is the most graphic of the OT prophets? We think of Elijah on Mt. Carmel when it comes to bodily involvement. He built the altar with twelve stones, made a trench, cut the bull in pieces and laid on the wood. And at Kidron he killed the false prophets. Scattered throughout the prophets are the illustrations, idioms, figures of speech that enliven the narratives. Amos has "As the shepherd rescues from the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, so shall the people of Israel who dwell in Samaria be rescued, with the corner of a couch and part of a bed." 3:12. This simile is right out of life. Hosea portrays Israel well with, "Like a stubborn heifer..." 4:16 But if you were to pick out the prophet with the most bodily involvement, and the greatest number of illustrations out of life, it would have to be Ezekiel.

In this study we go into the book to learn from how God used Ezekiel and how Ezekiel portrayed the message to the people with words. Of course some ways of Ezekiel we can't and wouldn't duplicate such as being confined to his house, bound with cords and his tongue cleaving to the roof of his mouth. 3:22-27 Some of the graphic pictures he wrote of were given directly from the Lord and we do not have that. But in considering Ezekiel's words we can imitate to an extent in trying to paint a picture. There is much to learn from the book in about being vivid, by that is meant that a picture is given that we can see in our mind's eye. Drawing pictures with words is a concern in this study along with the involvement of our body and expressions.

Even though we are looking at the 'how' of portrayal, we don't want to lose sight of the content as being uppermost. Ezekiel's message and ours is of sin and grace. Law is clearly enunciated, "... the soul that sins shall die." 18:4 God's yearning love for his rebellious people is evident, "Cast away from you all transgressions which you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God; so turn, and live." 18:31-32 And whether it is justification or sanctification it is always by the power of God through His Word by His grace, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances." 36:25-27 In a book that deals so much with judgment and warning it is important to remember that repentance and faith are being sought for by God through His prophet.

As we go through this Study we will be Having pictures from Artists of what Ezekiel wrote. Of Course none of These artists were There, so what they Picture is drawn From Ezekiel's Words. Words Do paint a picture. Our concern as Preachers is to Portray in as vivid A manner as Possible what the Word says. As we Honestly assess our Work we simply Conclude that we All need more of This skill worked On within us. As We go through the Book we won't be Looking at every Graphic example, So that you surely Can add to this Study on your Own.

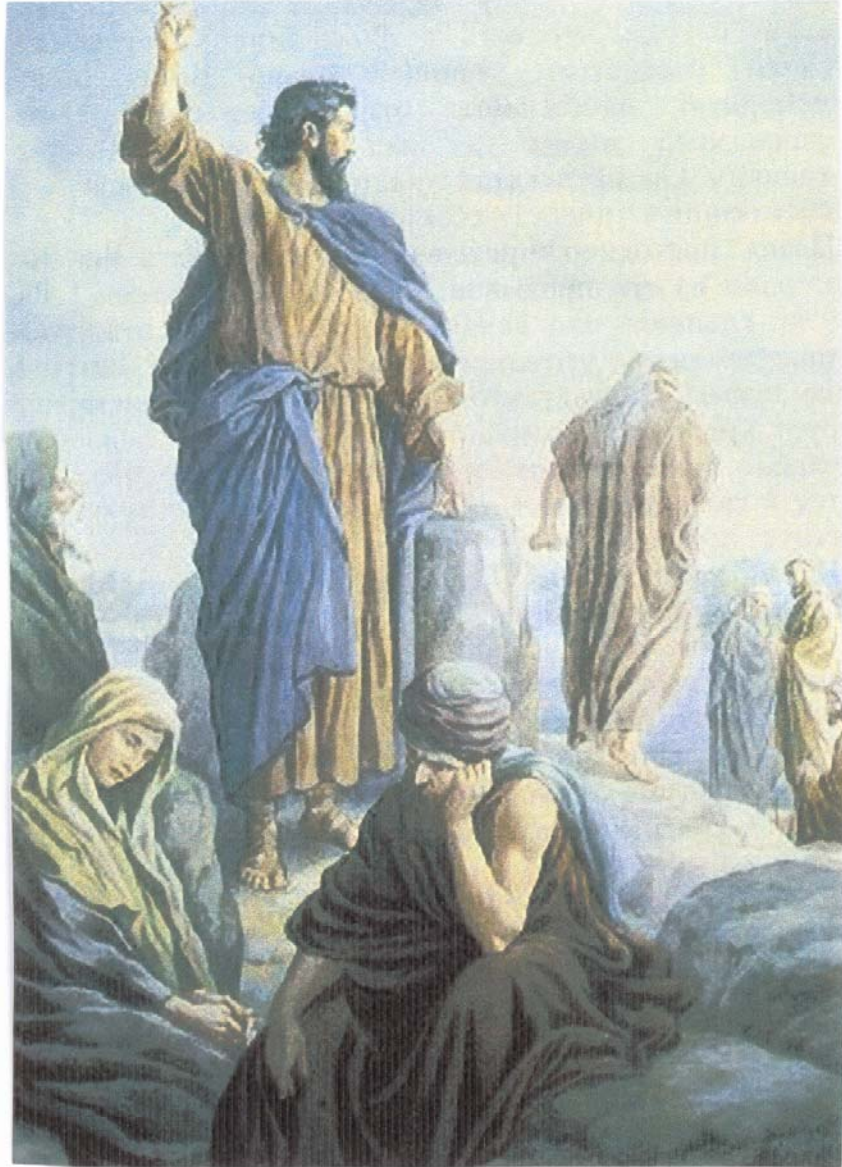


1:4-28 Throne Vision

On this page we have an artist's rendering of what he thought Ezekiel saw. What do you think of it? Are Ezekiel's words accurately represented here? There is no doubt about it that this initial vision in the book is not a simple one to comprehend, being rather the most involved one to comprehend. Our task as preachers is not so difficult as was Ezekiel's in giving in words the picture of the throne vision. Just as this illustration does though we want to give color so to speak to what God's Word says.

2:5 “And whether they hear or refuse to hear(for they are a rebellious house) they will know that there has been a prophet among them.”

Well now after you
Have preached can
People say this,
“There has been a
prophet among us?”
Our task is to
Preach with all
Our effort as if
It depends on us,
Even though it
Does not, but
Depends upon
God. This does
Not lessen our
Involvement in
The task. With
Ezekiel his was
A total absorp-
Tion or involve-
Ment. Often in
His day the
People would
Purposely not
Listen as we
See in this
Picture. What
To do then, just
Walk away
Ourselves? Or
Redouble our
Efforts to get
The message
Across?



Preaching must not be dependent on the people’s response as to how well or poorly we communicate the message from God. It must be dependent on being good stewards of the gifts and abilities that God has given each of us. And it depends on asking God to give us

more of His Spirit and a greater measure of skill to speak what He wants spoken so that the people hear the truth, though whether they accept it or not is not up to us. What we say may have its effect later if how we said it allows the mind of the hearer to have a 'hook' so to speak to hang the message on. What do we leave with people after they hear us that can be readily recalled? An illustration, a key word, a picture that can be recalled and with that the meaning or sense of the message.

3:1 "And he said to me, 'Son of man, eat what is offered to you; eat this scroll, and go speak, to the house of Israel.'"

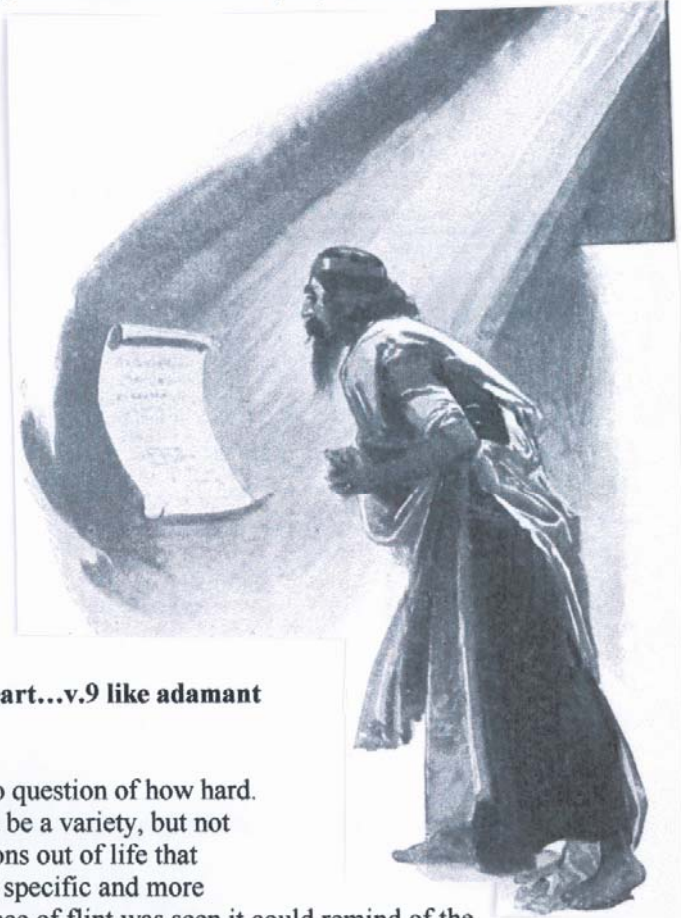
As Ezekiel ate the scroll it was sweet
In his mouth. Do we love to preach?
Is the delivering of God's Word to
People a joy for us or is it a task
That has to be done, something
That is drudgery. There will be
A bitterness that can come later,
But in speaking the Word it should
Be sweet to our taste. The bitterness
Is due to people's rejection or
Due to persecution that comes
Upon the preacher who is doing
His work and faithful to his
Call.

3:7 "The house of Israel will not listen to you; for they are not willing to listen to me; because all the house of Israel are of a hard forehead and of a stubborn heart...v.9 like adamant harder than flint..."

With the addition of 'flint' there is no question of how hard. With just the word 'hard' there could be a variety, but not with the addition of 'flint.' Illustrations out of life that people are familiar with make things specific and more readily remembered. Next time a piece of flint was seen it could remind of the stubbornness of Israel. This is not just being a matter of more picturesque. It is a matter of helping people to remember what was said as they view the item mentioned in the metaphor.

3:15 "And I sat there overwhelmed among them seven days."

Do we show expressions on our face or in our bodily composure demonstrate something in the message. Here for seven days Ezekiel had the emotion of being "overwhelmed."

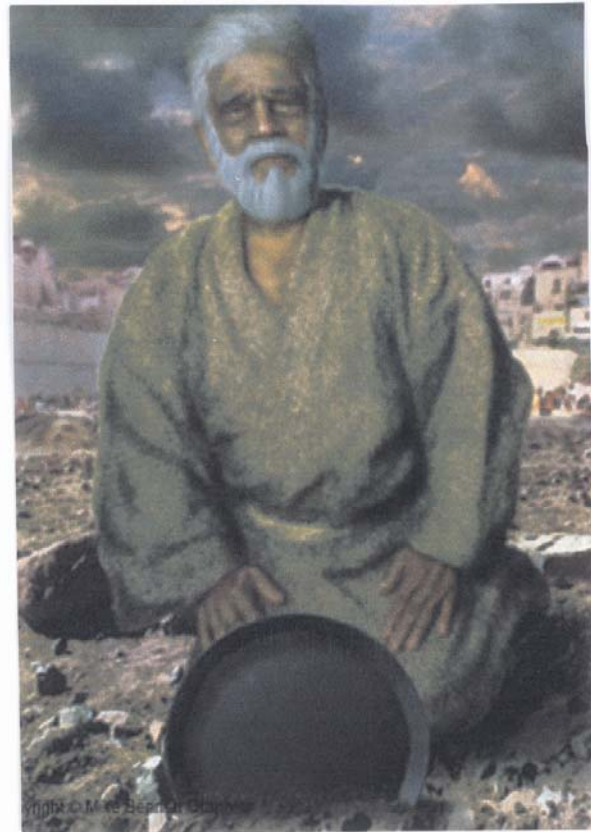


In some cultures people don't like to demonstrate emotion. Yet in trying to get the message across in as vivid a way as possible this is important to practice. Think of some ways in which you would demonstrate different emotions as you are preaching.

4:1-3 “And you, O son of man, take a brick and lay it before you, and portray upon it a city, even Jerusalem; and put siegeworks against it, and build a siege wall against it, and cast up a mound against it; set camps also against it, and plant battering rams against it round about. And take an iron plate, and place it as an iron wall between you and the city; and set your face toward it, and let it be in a state of siege... This is a sign for the house of Israel.”



These were visual aids that God Proscribed for Ezekiel to use to teach The people. In the USA we have banners On walls of our churches as visual aids. We also have windows that have glass Pictures of different religious scenes. I use banners in preaching at times Giving a banner to a pastor after using It. The two I have used so far are on The Trinity and on the Church's Purpose in this world. If you just look at The pictures given of the brick and the Plate you can see how those aids would Allow clearer teaching of the points God Would have made by Ezekiel. And as You look at these two color pictures, Which would you prefer – color or Black and white. All of us would Prefer color pictures because that

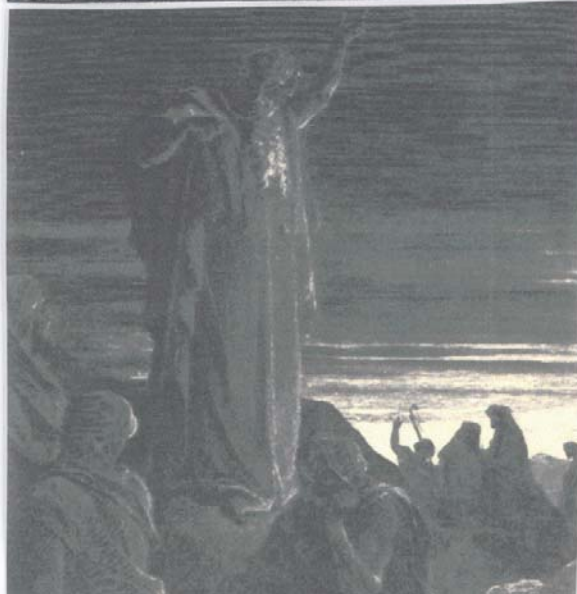


Gives a better picture just as in real life. Real life is in color. So also let us use our language to color the mental picture we are giving our people. A visual aid simply helps to add 'color' so to speak. We cannot do as Ezekiel did laying on one side and then another as in 4:4-8. But what we can do, let us do by being inventive. I especially like to use colors and what they symbolize with passages supporting the use of a color: red/blood, white/righteousness, gold/the crown of righteousness, black/sin and the grave, blue/Christ coming again in the sky, green/our Good Shepherd now leading us in wholesome pasturage. In India Hindus will wear color threads on their wrists to show respect for one of their gods. I hand out after a sermon on the colors above a wristband with those colored threads woven together as a sign of our religion. The people then take home a symbol of what was preached and can wear it to remember the Word.

5:1 "...take a sharp sword; use it as a barber's razor and pass it over your head and your beard..."

I don't bring this illustration up to encourage you to cut your hair per se for preaching. It is an example though of Ezekiel's physical involvement in his preaching. That is something we should think about. Some people talk about 'body language' or how we do things with our body that speaks to other people. Why not in preaching also? With the hair being burned it was a sign in Ezekiel of God's judgement on the idolatry of the people. Think though for a moment about the terrible smell of burning hair. Think how you could display your horror at that aroma.

6:1-5 "...say, You mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God! Thus says the Lord God to The mountains and the hills, To the ravines and the valleys"



In this oracle to the "mountains, hills, ravines and valleys" the figure of speech of a metonymy is used, that is of having some words stand for others. These geographical places are where the people lived. And the high places in particular are where the people committed idolatry. This approach is more graphic than just speaking to the people. In addressing where they live instead of the people it adds variety to the preaching. And this is what we want also isn't it. We want to add variety in order to get the points across. It is not just for beauty's sake, but for edification. We can say the same thing in different ways in order to teach a point. In this example, just look everywhere and that is where the people are rebellious.

6:11 "Thus says the Lord God: 'Clap your hands, and stamp your foot, and say, Alas! because of all the evil abominations of the house of Israel...'"

Here is even an audible aid. This can be a way of getting attention too of course. This may be an idiomatic way among the people at that time that conveys what I do not know at this time. It is though a reminder that sounds are important in delivery of the message also. What are some ways in which you could use sounds to convey thoughts?

7:10-11 "Behold the day!...injustice(rod) has blossomed, pride has budded. Violence has grown up into a rod of wickedness..."

Notice how instead of saying they did injustice and practiced pride and that violence increases a very figurative way of speaking is involved. These things grow like a rod stuck in the ground. They blossom and
And spread their poison and bear
Deadly fruit that is no good but
Harmful. This is all involved in
The language used above. So
Much more is conveyed with this
Picturesque wording.

7:14 "They have blown the trumpet and made all ready; but none goes to battle, for my wrath is upon their multitude."

Do you get the picture even
More than through the one
Beside this? Instead of a
Tumult of noisy preparations
There is silence. Instead of
Forces being marshaled
And dust clouds rising
There is silence. The sound



Of the horn echoes over the plain and that is it.

7:16 “And if any survivors escape, they will be on the mountains, like doves of the valleys, all of them moaning, every one over his iniquity.”

Here we have another audible simile. Who has not heard the moaning of doves? So the people are like silly doves sitting there and moaning how this is so sad and why must it happen and on and on it goes like the doves in the branches filling the air with their moaning.

8:1-4 “...the glory of the God of Israel was there...”

We know from chapter one how the glory was revealed and here again. How would you portray the glory of the Lord to your people? With what would you compare it? Is there anything similar that you could use to picture it?

8:7f.”...hole in the wall...dig in the wall...Go in...”

As you preach about this, would you bend to portray, stand and look about in going through? If not, why not? What hand gestures could you use here in both going through and coming out?

8:17 “...Lo, they put the branch to their nose.”

I haven't yet been able to find out what this idiom means. But even without knowing it conjures up a picture of mocking God, disregarding His warnings. This adage gives vividness to the reaction of the people to God's warning of judgement. As we preach, what adages or idioms could we use from the culture we are in to give visual expression to the teaching?

9:4 “...put a mark upon the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations...”

“Sigh and groan” is a more expressive way of saying they disapprove of what the people are doing. The art of preaching involves making it more expressive. The “mark upon the forehead” is easy to picture and gives the idea of prominence. The mark was to be seen so not on the foot or the back or lower leg. So our faith is to be seen, how we live and follow God.

11:19 “...I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh.”

What a contrast is given here! A stone is dead; the flesh is alive. A stone is impenetrable; the flesh is soft and easily penetrated. A stony heart is cold; a heart of flesh throbs to the beat of its Maker. How do we use contrasts in our preaching? There is a clear difference

between black and white. Such contrasts help our people to compare and remember. What contrasts have you used recently?

11:13 "...while I was prophesying, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then I fell down upon my face, and cried with a loud voice, and said, 'Ah Lord God!...'"

What would you do with
Unexpected things that
Occur during your
Preaching? How do you
Cope with these? Notice
Ezekiel's open expression
At seeing this death.
During a service things
Can happen that can be
Used in the preaching.
Do we take notice and
Incorporate them or do
We ignore them. They
Can be used as aids in
Our preaching, but we
Have to be flexible
Praying to the Spirit
That He helps us.



12:4-6 "You shall bring out your baggage by day in their sight, as baggage for exile; and you shall go forth yourself at evening in their sight...Dig through the wall in their sight...In their sight you shall lift the baggage...you shall cover your face...I have made you as sign for the house of Israel."

Four times in this narrative it is said "in their sight." That is a lesson for us in that we want people to see as well as hear. We want our words to convey an image as much as possible. A picture is worth a thousand words is an old adage. Our



word pictures can convey more with expressiveness in word and action.

12:18 “...eat your bread with quaking, and drink water with trembling and with fearfulness.”

Notice how God adds to “fearfulness” with “quaking...trembling.” We can add also by trembling and quaking as we speak these words or others. We are not to be actors though. What we do must be a natural thing with us. And this is what is meant when we say to develop a skill.

13:10 “...they have misled my people, saying, ‘Peace,’ when there is no peace; and because, when the people build a wall, these prophets daub it with whitewash”

These prophets of course do not build a wall or daub it with actual whitewash. This is an illustration to point out how they cover over the wrongs and tell their lies by appealing to their outward supposed prophetic power and office. We remember how our Lord Jesus taught about whitewashed sepulchers, but inwardly there are dead man’s bones. Glistening white on the outside, but dead on the inside. Here the wall will fall, and no amount of silly whitewash will make it strong to stand. How else could we say this?

15:6 “...Like the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give up the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

One could just say ‘they are facing judgment,’ but this simile is more instructive. Fire will devour. Think of fire how it turns solid objects like wood into ashes that float away on the slightest breeze. We could only with great effort carry a large log, though once it is burned a light breeze casts it weightless ashes in the air. The people used these vines of the forest for their cooking fires. As the people would gather the wood, so they could be thinking how God would gather the impenitent. The next time a fire is made with the wood the idea of a coming judgment can come to mind.

16:1f. The Foundling Child to the Unfaithful Wife

In this chapter there is an extended metaphor showing in detail how faithful and loving God was in the face of the faithlessness of Israel. The story is right out of life. Do we use such stories and relate the spiritual to them? Notice that God promises and man despises. God helps and man turns away. Here we have the message of sin and grace in detail and expressively laid out for us. An extended story like this is called an allegory.

17:1f. “...Son of man, propound a riddle, and speak an allegory to the house of Israel; say, Thus says the Lord God: A great eagle with great wings and long pinions, rich in plumage of many colors, came to Lebanon and took the top of the cedar...”

Have you ever told a riddle and let the people think about it for a while and then sooner or later in the sermon explained it? This is a commendable teaching method. It gets people to think and wonder and try to solve.

Notice it is a "great eagle with great Wings." The picture is enhanced. As you tell a riddle or allegory the People can be thinking about the Meaning, if you announce that it is such before the telling. This Eagle has "rich plumage of Many colors." It is no ordinary Eagle. As you go through this Chapter you can see the meaning. When we use this approach, we Have to be careful to clearly State the meaning Of what is what.

In this allegory Where is the Gospel And the Messiah Presented? As Gospel preachers Would want to Give that vital Message as the Ultimate thrust Of our teaching. Can you think of Other riddles and Allegories used In Scripture?



Here is a Picture from 18:7. How would you describe it and even in several ways?



19:2-3 "...lioness"

Before looking at this reference what is conveyed with the word "lioness" and to what could you liken her?

19:10-14 "...vine..."

Before looking at this reference how would you tell about a vine in a vineyard and then what would you liken it to?

There will
Be two
Reactions
To the Word.



20:3 “Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God, Is it to inquire of me that you come? As I live, says the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you.”

Ezekiel is no less expressive to the one than to the other. The two reactions are: to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. 2 Cor. 2:16 The elders came to Ezekiel not in sincerity, seeking the truth and the reaction was accordingly. We could even say that in our preaching we must be more expressive to those who are perishing, seeking to turn them from their deathly way. People in our days will have itching ears, accumulating for themselves teachers to their own liking. We have to preach the Word with all power to dissuade them.

21:6 “Sigh therefore, son of man; sigh with breaking heart and bitter grief before their eyes.”

Do we really put ourselves into our preaching by words and actions as Ezekiel was to do here? The Lord wanted a reaction, “Why do you sigh?” We preach also for reaction. Sometimes during the sermon we even get a reaction which would allow us to alter our presentation accordingly. Notice that it is that they hear and that it is “before their eyes.”

21:8-10 “...A sword, a sword is sharpened and also polished, sharpened for slaughter, polished to flash like lightning!...”

The “polished to flash like Lightning gives the idea of Swift and we can just see it as it wreaks a just Judgment. And notice how The imagery continues. “... come down twice, yea thrice... hearts may melt... glittering sword... Cut sharply to right and left...” vv. 14-17

21:26 “...Remove the turban, and take off the crown...”

In the coming judgment Upon Israel everything Will be changed. They



There can't be anything more graphic in Ezekiel to portray man's sin and waywardness than the "two women, daughters of one mother" story of Oholah and Oholibah. The one represents Samaria and the other Jerusalem. Illustrations abound in the narrative and the meaning is crystal clear. Have you told a story you made up in preaching? What did you tell and what was the meaning? Think of what Nathan told in going to David.

24:1-14 The Boiling Pot

As you read through this
See how it is made clear
In this allegory that sadly
The people just do not
Change. What is the
Rust that remains no
Matter what is done?
What illustrations could
You use to point out the
Resiliency of sin, one
Illustration from the
Bible and one from
Daily life?



24:24 "Thus shall Ezekiel be to you a sign."

Ezekiel's wife dies and it is then used as a sign to the people. "Sigh, but not aloud; make no mourning for the dead." Ezekiel's wife was the "delight of (his) eyes." And she was taken. His silence and lack of mourning was a warning to Israel that God's fury would be carried out without respite. We can also use situations from our lives which people are familiar with to use in our preaching. This can be done so long as it does not glorify us, but glorifies God. People already know a thing and so have a picture of it with them. We can then refer to this which they already know and have seen.

Chapters 25-32

In these chapters we have the prophecies against the surrounding nations: Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon and Egypt. Go through these chapters and pick out ten examples of figurative language and the meaning of each.

33:7 "So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me."

While Ezekiel is not on the wall of the city peering out over the plain for the enemy, the image is no less important. He is to warn like such a watchman. With just the one word "watchman" the whole idea is conveyed. And underlying this is God's love. "As I live,

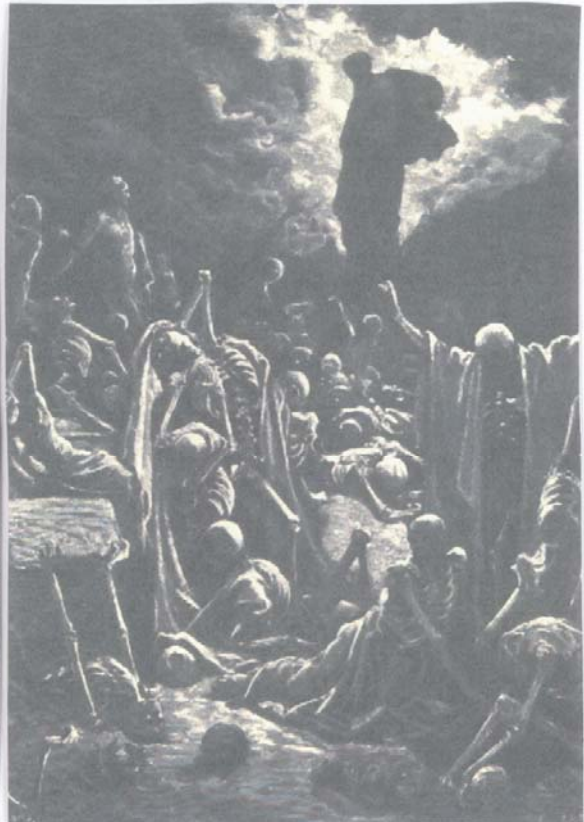
says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and life..." v.11

34:2" ...Ho, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves!..."

This chapter has the imagery of shepherds who do not take care of the sheep, but who are selfish and think only of themselves. This is so contrary to how a shepherd should be. God puts Himself as the one who must search out for the sheep because the worthless shepherds will not care for the flock. V.11 And He will separate the good from the evil. In verses 23-24 we have the messianic promise, "And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken." This imagery of the shepherd was so familiar to the people they could easily get the message. In different cultures at times different illustrations have to be used to teach the same thing as some cultural items are not familiar one country to another. Notice how Jesus uses this imagery as we have it in John 10:1-18. Jesus' use has variations from Ezekiel's. So also we can use a basic comparison or story and vary some parts to fit the situation.

37 The Valley of Dry Bones

This has to be the best known chapter of Ezekiel. Why? Because of the vivid imagery That conveys the joy of the resurrection from the dead. Five artists pictures follow.



will not remain as they were. How would you express that? We have the expression in English – topsy-turvy, which means the top rolls down; things are inverted; there is confusion.

22:12 “In you men take bribes to shed blood; you take interest and increase and make gain of your neighbors by extortion; and you have forgotten me, says the Lord God.”

Notice how in this picture
The artist has conveyed
The sense of the passage.
How would you draw
A picture with words
Like this one with a
Mother and her child
Facing a greedy and
Grasping man who is
Only interested in
Money?



22:18 “...the house of Israel has become dross to me; all of them, silver and bronze and tin and iron and lead in a furnace, have become dross.”

With the use of different metals which have different values we get the idea that all the house of Israel have become dross. Dross is the scum formed on the top of molten metal in a cauldron. It is a waste and worthless.

22:30 “And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none.”

Here we have a sentence with all very normal words except perhaps “breach”, but what a searching picture is given. God looks everywhere for one to hold the line, to be faithful, to stand in the breach. And He finds “none.” What an inditement of Israel! We see the great need with the word breach, an opening that has to be plugged or trouble and devastation comes through it. Think of an army besieging a city that then breaks through the wall in one place. Unless someone stands there to repel the enemy, all is lost within the city. And no one steps forward.

23:1f. Oholah/Samaria – the northern kingdom, Oholibah/Jerusalem – the southern kingdom



These are not just dry Bones, but “very dry” v.2 The valley was “Full of bones.” V.1 And there came the “rattling” v.7. This is an exultant chapter that is enlivens as it gives the clear picture of life from the grave for God’s people. In one picture connected with this we have Ezekiel with the Two sticks that Are joined v.16.



There is a visual aid so simple and so clear. We could also use such in our preaching.

Five different artists and five different pictures, yet we all know what the content is about. So it is with us as we develop our skill in preaching. We have different gifts and abilities. Under our God’s gracious hand we seek to portray what the Word says. And with those different gifts we will have variety in our sermons.

Chapters 38-39 Gog and Magog

The prophecy of these enemies of God's people and the destruction of them is with descriptions of Events that do not lack because The language does not lack. Here are some examples:
 "devise an evil scheme"
 "from the uttermost parts of the north with all his hordes"
 "fall upon the quiet people"
 "like a cloud covering the land"
 "everyman's sword will be against his brother"
 "I will give you to birds of prey of every sort"



Chapters 40-48 The Temple

Who is the man of 40:3 and how do you know who he is? The language.



Conclusion

There is so much more
That we could learn
From Ezekiel on preaching,
Making the message one
That grasps the people's
Minds and leaves images.

Here is a quiz for you.



In chapter 36 which verse does
This picture portray?

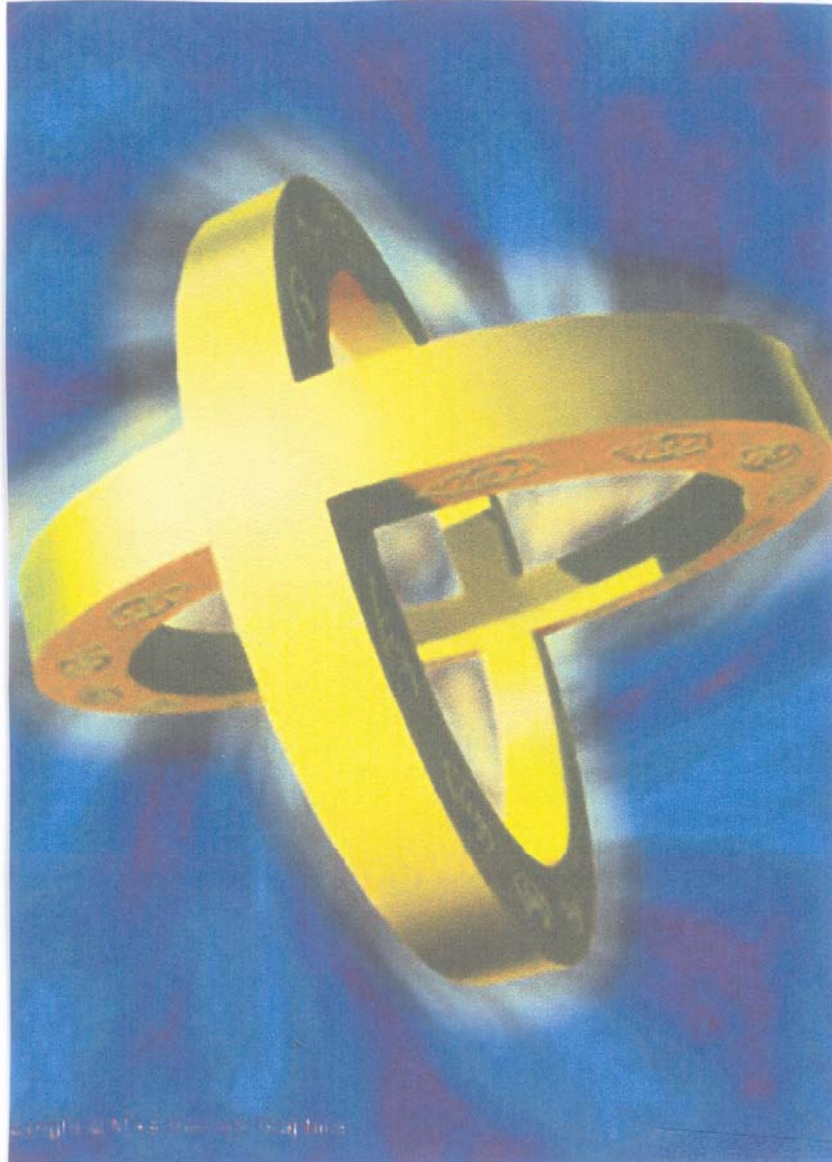


In chapter 26 which verse does
This picture portray?

In the following pictures can you tell what each of them is about?







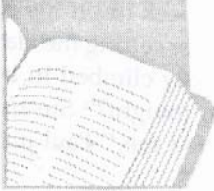
And who can forget the wheel within a wheel? Is this what you thought it looked like?

Exercise – Think of examples after the following involving the five senses.

- Hearing – as quiet as moonlight on grass, the sound of many waters(loud)
- Seeing – shining as brightly as the sun at full strength, so dark you couldn't see your hand before your face
- Tasting – bitter as vinegar to the teeth, as sweet as a honeycomb
- Smelling – by now he stinks, the prayers of the saints are like incense rising to God
- Feeling – a hand can be gentle upon the shoulder or holding firmly in a tight grasp, or pulling with all one's might, a blind man reads Braille with his fingers, touches the face to see if the skin is smooth like a baby's or wrinkled like an old person's

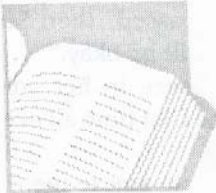
HOMILETICAL HINTS (Preaching with Freshness/Mawhinney)

1



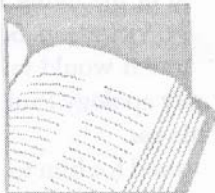
Often those who hold a high view of God's Word mistakenly think they don't need to do the diligent work of preparation. They just throw out the message to the people in whatever form it first comes to them.

2



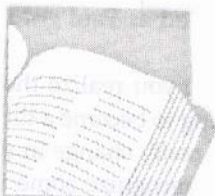
Attack early and attack daily! Each day will add more input and energy to your message. All week long you'll be filling up your reservoir, not draining it.

3



As time goes by a certain smoothness comes with the experience of the years. That smoothness has a more professional sound to it, but it may also bring with it a certain dullness.

4



Jesus accented particular truths and set them apart in memorable form. Even if the crowd or the disciples didn't immediately grasp what He was saying, they would remember His words long after He had spoken them.

5



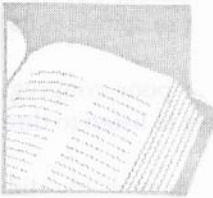
There are many kinds of structures. It's good to change your approach from time to time to hold your people's interest—and your own, too.

6



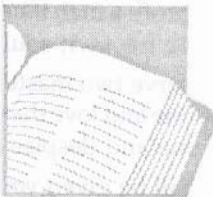
Surprise power is that element of Scripture that leaps out and startles the attentive reader.

7



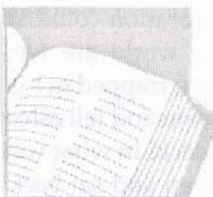
Instead of just telling the people how they should think, Jesus asked them to search their own souls to see if they were in right relation to God.

8

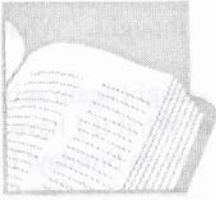


Jesus made a conscientious effort to avoid the time trap. He was too active in His Father's business to become sidetracked.

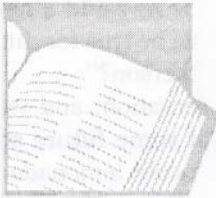
9



Experience the exhilaration that comes from discovering the deep, hidden treasures of God's Word, treasures that cannot be unearthed by a half-hearted effort using a child's toy shovel.

10

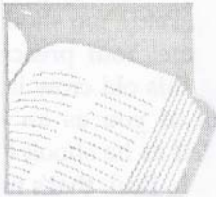
Most of your ministry is reminding. There is nothing wrong with reminding people, just so you do so in fresh ways.

11

Illustrations, like babies, have a habit of being born at awkward times. Get in the habit of carrying an illustration notebook.

12

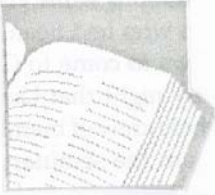
Words that appeal to the five senses—sight, touch, smell, taste, and hearing will help people sense what you're saying, understand it better, and remember it longer.

13

When the people know at the beginning that a message will help them overcome their fears or teach them important insights into how they can better cope with life, they'll listen more closely.

14

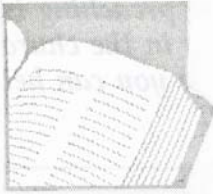
The message should have a clear purpose, a target. Like the rifle, it should be aimed carefully at that target to hit the mark.

15

Part of the power of a sermon is to hear that someone is out there on the cutting edge right now. Enter the pulpit each week having had a fresh encounter with Christ and having returned from the battlefield to give a progress report.

16

You have a great God who loves you more dearly than you love yourself. He called you to this difficult work, but He has also promised to equip you for it and to never leave you or forsake you along the way.

17

All too often the preacher of the Word strains out the delicious wonders and serves it up with boring dullness, drained of all life!

18

Remember how the apostle Paul told slaves that their lives should adorn the doctrine of God? Our personalities, as we preach, ought to adorn the truth rather than obscure it.
