
The Book of Ezekiel



The rod



-The direction of the sword is determined: toward Israel, because God's earlier attempts at discipline, which He calls the rod, were unsuccessful in getting the people to turn

-The rod, though painful, would have been not nearly as bad as the sword, but the people have made their bed by situating themselves in a forest of dry trees, ready to burn in an instant

-Has God ever spared you from additional pain? How does His discipline show up?

Persistence



-The Lord commands Ezekiel to continue on with the prophecy, twice and even three times, which is a little bit different than in previous prophecies, when God used many different methods

-The persistence with which Ezekiel delivers the message will hopefully cut deep and highlight the urgency to some, but nevertheless, it will be an annoyance to many others

What value is there in being consistent and persistent? What are the results of being consistently Christ-like out in the world? Can persistence go wrong?

The Red Carpet



-God next tells Ezekiel to do something that seems traitorous and counter-productive: “rolling out the red carpet” for King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to come as God’s chosen instrument

-He does this by creating signs that mark the way, meaning that Nebuchadnezzar and his armies could not get lost in their travels on their way to destroy Jerusalem

Do you feel that the red carpet is being rolled out for the enemies of God today? As Christians, what can be done about it? What is out of our control?

Decisions, decisions

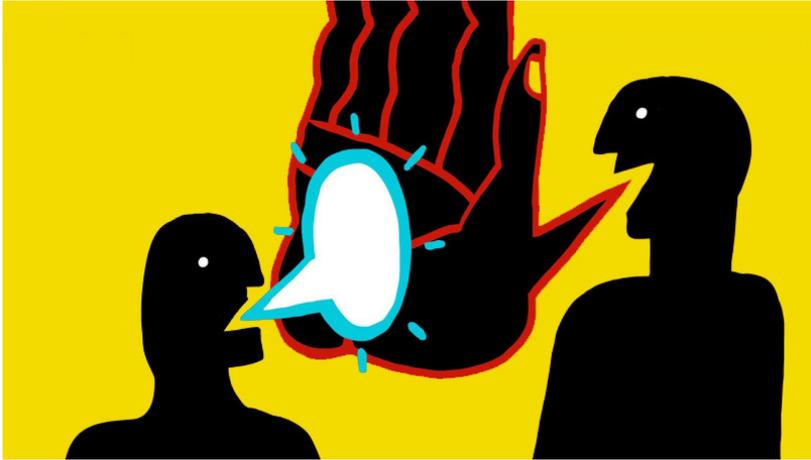


-In this time, people made decisions in different ways, especially when it came to battles, so Nebuchadnezzar uses three types of divination to decide what to do

-By drawing an arrow out of a quiver, looking at teraphim (carved human images), and soothsayers looking at an animal liver, he would determine how and when to attack Jerusalem

What is the role of superstition in our society today? What is different than before? Why does it seem harmless? What harm is still being done?

Naysayers



-Though divination and other superstitions are normally random and unreliable, God guides the results to fall on Jerusalem as the city to attack

-But Jerusalem is full of naysayers, making oaths and swearing to high heaven that Nebuchadnezzar was being deceived

-Who are the naysayers of our day? What do they miss due to stubbornness? How can they be reached with the Gospel?
