

The Grace of Prophecy

Ezekiel 12:17–28

Veritas Adult Community

March 31, 2019

A Pantomime of Horror

¹⁷The following message of YHWH came to me: ¹⁸Human, eat your food with quaking, and drink your water with fearful trembling. ¹⁹Then say to the people of the land, “Thus has Adonai YHWH declared concerning the inhabitants of Jerusalem upon the land of Israel: ‘They will eat their food with anxiety and drink their water with trepidation, so her land will be stripped of its contents, because of the violence of all of its inhabitants. ²⁰The inhabited cities will lie in ruins and the land will be a desolation. Then you will know that I am YHWH.’”

When Prophecy Fails

²¹The following message of YHWH came to me: ²²Human, what is this proverb that you have circulating in the land of Israel: “Time passes, and every vision fails”?

²³Therefore, say to them, “Thus has the Lord YHWH declared: ‘I will put an end to this proverb; they will never quote it again in Israel. On the contrary, say to them, “The time is near for every vision to be fulfilled!

²⁴Indeed there will never be any vain vision or misleading divination within the house of Israel again, ²⁵for I am YHWH. I declare whatever I declare, and it is fulfilled. It will not be delayed any longer. Indeed, in your own lifetime, O rebellious household, I will make a pronouncement and I will fulfill it.” The declaration of the Lord YHWH.

When Prophecy Does Not Apply to Us

²⁶The following message of YHWH came to me: ²⁷Human, notice what the house of Israel is saying: “The vision that he sees pertains to many years ahead; it is of the distant future that he prophecies—.”

²⁸Therefore say to them, “Thus has the Lord YHWH declared, ‘There will be no more delay. Every pronouncement I make shall surely be fulfilled.’ The declaration of the Lord YHWH.”

Interpretation

A Pantomime of Horror (12:17–20)

1. Preamble (v. 17)
2. The Command to Perform the Sign-action (v. 18)
3. The Interpretation of the Sign-action (vv. 19–20a)
4. The Concluding Recognition Formula (20b)

Lessons from 12:17–20

1. In God’s system of justice, the judgment is always just.
2. Even in times of crisis people may live under the illusion that all is well.

Prophecy—True and False (12:21–14:11)

Two Disputations with Cynics (12:21–28)

1. When Prophecy Fails (vv. 21–25)

- a. Preamble and Quotation (vv. 21–22)
- b. The Counter-Thesis (v. 23a)
- c. The Dispute/Rebuttal (vv. 23b–25)

2. When Prophecy is Irrelevant (vv. 26–28)

- a. Preamble and Quotation (vv. 26–27)
- b. The Counter-Thesis (v. 28)

3. Lessons from These Disputation Speeches

- a. First, spiritual coldness is often expressed in cynicism toward YHWH and his spokespersons. (2 Pet 3:2–13).
- b. The LORD will always have the last word.