1. **Intro:**
   1.1. A member of the Albanian Team will share – Brandon Smith.
   1.2. **Prayer:** The Greeks had a race in their Olympic games that was unique. The winner was not the runner who finished first. **It was the runner who finished with his torch still lit.** I want to run all the way with the flame of my torch still lit for Him.¹
   1.3. Ezekiel uses both visual aids & 4 action sermons to describe the tragic spiritual decline among the people of Israel.
      1.3.1. He uses 4 illustrations as symbols to communicate God's heart.
   1.4. **Outline:** Ezekiel’s Sandbox; Ezekiel’s Sleeping Habits; Ezekiel’s BBQ; Ezekiel’s Haircut.
      1.4.1. Or, The Fact of the Siege; The Length of the Siege; The Severity of the Siege; The Results of the Siege.
   1.5. Let’s roll up our sleeves & jump into Ezekiel’s Sandbox with him!

2. **[1] EZEKIEL’S SANDBOX! (4:1-3)**
   2.1. The Fact of the Siege!
   2.2. The Symbols! (1,2)
   2.3. Clay Tablet – Soft clay tablet Babylon used as a writing pad; sun-baked brick.
      2.3.1. Shape of Jerusalem was so distinct, so it was easy to sketch, & was easily recognized.
   2.4. Lay siege against it – “Play war”.
      2.4.1. Siege wall/earthen towers – Walls of dirt erected all around Jerusalem. It protected the offensive army from arrows from walls.
      2.4.2. Mound/Ramp - Smooth incline to be able to push siege towers & battering rams up it.
      2.4.3. Set up Camps – To cut off any supplies. No relief. No escape.
      2.4.4. Battering Rams – constant hammering gradually weakening city walls
   2.5. Iron Plate – Probably signifying the barrier between God & His people.
      2.5.1. **Q:** Can we as His children today cause a barrier to exist between us?
         2.5.1.1. Sure, a barrier in fellowship, because of sin or our leaving 1st love; a barrier in prayer, thus Him not hearing(answering) them.
         2.5.1.2. **Read** Ezek.6:9 – God was *crushed* by their sin! 😞

¹ Fan The Flame, J. Stowell, Moody, 1986, p. 32
2.5.2. Eph.4:30 Do not grieve the H.S. - God is saddened & disappointed when His people fail to live up to their new nature.
2.5.2.1. A friend of Vance Havner coined a word by combining the words squelch and quench. He used to say, "Don't squench the Spirit." [Squelch(silence) and quench(extinguish)]

2.6. The Significance! (3)
2.7. The Babylonian army, like an iron wall, will soon surround Jerusalem.

3.1. The Length of the Siege!
3.2. The Symbols! (5-7)
3.3. Lie on Left Side – 390 days for the years of Israel’s sin.
3.4. Lie on Right Side – 40 days for the years of Judah’s sin.
3.5. Lie on his Back w/arms tied -
3.6. The Significance! (4,8)
3.7. Each day(390 + 40) represents on year of punishment.
3.8. On back w/arms tied – depicts the helplessness of Jerusalem against the Babylonian attack. [representing Israel's inability to escape the captivity]

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4.1. The Severity of the Siege!
4.2. The Symbol! (9-15)
4.3. Food & water rationing? – as the people in Jerusalem will do when there is a scarcity of food, because of the Babylon invasion.
4.4. 6 Grain bread – Normally, Israelites would use only wheat; mixing the wheat w/courser grains like barley was a sign of poverty & famine.
4.5. He’s to prepare a meager meal & cook it over dried cow dung [better than option #1]
4.5.1. How he must have desired a George Foreman Grill about now!
4.6. Actually dung was used in the Middle east because of scarcity of wood(still is).
4.6.1. It is mixed with straw. Allowed to dry. It burnt slowly.
4.6.2. But…gave off an unpleasant odor!
4.6.3. Human Dung? – Repulsive!
4.6.4. Q: Why the shock treatment? I think to show what “defiled” looks like in God’s eyes & smells like in God’s nostrils.
4.6.4.1. Defile = pollute, soil, contaminate.

4.7. The Significance! (16,17)
4.8. This is a warning that the people of Israel will be forced to eat defiled food among the nations where God will drive them.
4.8.1. Daniel(in captivity) – Dan.1:5,8,12,15
4.8.2. Peter – Acts 10:14 But Peter said, “Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.”

4.9. They had left their 1st love! [Revive = to make alive again]
4.9.1. Warren Wiersbe said; “God would rather see His land devastated, the city of Jerusalem ruined, His temple destroyed, and His people killed and exiled, than to have them give such a false witness to the Gentile nations. Judgment begins with the people of God.”

4.10. I pray that God would find us a people whose hearts are totally devoted to him.
4.10.1. That we are interceding for our community and nation.
4.10.2. That we are praying for revival.
4.10.3. That we are looking within ourselves to make sure we are right with God.
4.11. Stephen Olford once said that revival is “an invasion from heaven that brings a conscious awareness of God.” ☺
4.12. Revival is “that sovereign work of God in which He visits His own people, restoring and releasing them into the fullness of His blessing.” Robert Coleman.
4.13. Revival is “A true revival means nothing less than a revolution, casting out the spirit of worldliness, making God’s love triumph in the heart.” Andrew Murray.
4.14. True revival is the people of God returning to their first love for God and sharing that love with the world.
4.14.1. We should pray that God would do this in us!

5.1. The Results of the Siege!
5.2. The Symbol! (1-4)
5.3. He is to shave both his head & beard & is to place the hair into 3 equal parts.
5.3.1. Baldness may be in style today, but this’d be a real sacrifice for a Jew
5.3.2. It spoke of mourning, or shame, humiliation, disgrace.
5.3.2.1. It symbolized Israel’s broken covenant w/the Lord.
5.3.3. 1st part burned; 2nd part struck w/the sword; 3rd part scattered by wind; small portion hidden in his fold of robe.

5.4. The Significance! (5-17)
5.5. Vs.12 interprets: This is to predict that 1/3 of Jerusalem’s people will soon die by pestilence/famine; another 3rd die by the sword (invasion); & the final 3rd will be scattered as they fled the devastated city.
5.5.1. Few strands, remnant that would be saved.

5.6. Q: Why was God angry with his people?
5.6.1. Because they rebelled against His law(6);
5.6.2. Because they defiled His temple(11);
5.6.3. Because they did more abominations than the heathen nations around them (5,6).
5.6.4. Because they did not glorify the Lord but used all His blessings to promote their sin.

5.7. Knowledge brings responsibility!
5.7.1. To whom much is given, much will be demanded.
5.7.2. Q: What are we doing with the knowledge we have of the Word of God? [Very important to me this few years]
5.7.3. Q: Are we responding to it? [If you are great, don’t always think you’re not!]
5.7.4. Q: Is it shaping our lives in godliness?2

5.8. Some Christians are less “Christian” in their lives than many who reject or ignore Christ. In the light of these verses what may we infer to be God’s attitude to this sad fact?

5.9. 390 years is a long time to continue in sin!
5.9.1. We can only marvel at the long-suffering of the Lord!
5.9.2. Q: As you look back on your life, has the Lord been Long-suffering in your life?

5.10. End: Remember the Greeks race. The winner was not the runner who finished 1st. It was the runner who finished with his torch still lit.
5.10.1. Let’s run all the way, with the flame of our torch still lit for Him.

2 Shepherd’s Notes; pg.13.