

# Ezekiel 12:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Tell them therefore, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision.

## Analysis

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God responds to the mocking proverb: 'Tell them therefore, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision.' God announces He will silence the mocking saying by fulfilling prophecies. When judgment comes, skeptics will stop quoting their dismissive proverb. The fulfillment will vindicate prophetic warnings.

The phrase 'days are at hand' (qarvu ha-yamim, קָרְבוּ הַיָּמִים) announces imminence—the time is near. The 'effect of every vision' (devar kol-chazon, דְּבָרַ קָל־חָזוֹן, literally 'word of every vision') indicates actual fulfillment. God's patience has limits; when exhausted, judgment swiftly follows. The contrast between 'days are prolonged' (skeptics) and 'days are at hand' (God's response) is stark.

From a Reformed perspective, this verse illustrates God's sovereignty over time and fulfillment. Human mockery doesn't delay or cancel divine purposes. When God determines the time is ripe, judgment comes regardless of skepticism. This warns against presumption and encourages patient trust—God's timing is perfect, neither too early nor too late, accomplishing His purposes optimally.

## Historical Context

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The prophecy was fulfilled within about five years—Ezekiel spoke around 591 BC; Jerusalem fell in 586 BC. The mockers' proverb indeed ceased when the city burned, the temple was destroyed, and the population was killed or exiled. Those who survived understood that prophetic visions hadn't failed but had been precisely fulfilled. Skepticism turned to desperate acknowledgment of prophetic truth, but too late to avoid judgment.

This pattern recurs throughout biblical history. Noah's contemporaries mocked until the flood came (Matthew 24:37-39). Lot's family thought he joked until Sodom's destruction (Genesis 19:14). Jesus warned Jerusalem, which largely rejected Him, then Rome destroyed the city in 70 AD. The pattern warns that scoffing at divine warnings doesn't prevent their fulfillment; it only hardens hearts until judgment.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does God's response to mockery demonstrate His sovereignty over human skepticism?
2. What does the transition from 'days are prolonged' to 'days are at hand' teach about God's timing?
3. In what ways should awareness of historical judgment silencing skeptics shape modern response to biblical warnings?

## Interlinear Text

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אֶת הַשְׁבָּתִי יְהוָה אָדָן יְאָמַר אֶלְيָהּ מִשְׁמֵר לְכָ |

H3651

**Tell**

H559

H413

H3541

כִּי אָמַר אֶלְיָהּ אָמַר

H559

**the Lord**

H136

אָדָן יְהוָה

H3068

אֶת הַשְׁבָּתִי

**to cease**

H853

H7673

הַפָּנֵשׁ לְ

וְלֹא בַּזֶּה

מִנְשָׁלְוָה!

I will make this proverb

H4912

H2088

H3808

and they shall no more use it as a proverb

H4911

כָּרְבָּו אֶלְיָהּ מִזְבֵּחַ רְאֵת אֶת |

H853

H5750

**in Israel**

H3588

H518

**but say**

H413

כָּרְבָּו

**are at hand**

H7126

בְּמִימָיו

וְלֹא בְּרִאָה

כָּל

מִזְוְנֵי

unto them The days and the effect

H3117

H1697

H3605

of every vision

H2377

## Additional Cross-References

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**Joel 2:1** (References Lord): Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand;

**Zephaniah 1:14** (References Lord): The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.

**Matthew 24:34** (Parallel theme): Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

**Ezekiel 18:3** (References God): As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel.