

36. Ezekiel and Judgment

Ezekiel is likely the oddest person in the Bible. You might say that it was God who told him to do some really strange things, but God speaks only into the nature of a person.

We have seen the pattern of Ezekiel's life in Jeremiah's timeline. Basically, Ezekiel was part of one of the early deportations to Babylon as a young man and his ministry was mostly to those of Judea living there.

Yet, even though there is not much action recorded regarding Ezekiel, his life spanned and was affected by all the great events of this time, and especially the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple.

A Knowing of God. One could find all sorts of avenues of inquiry inside Ezekiel's large and strange book, only some of which would be profitable for us to know Christ our life.

Ezekiel gives us the clearest and shortest rendition of the curse of the law. – The soul that sinneth shall die. And he is referenced several times by Paul bringing lines from his book into the gospel.

Over the years, I would read the first eleven chapters of Ezekiel and weep over a knowing of God entering me. I did not know what God meant, neither did I ever try to know. I knew that these were spirit words, and I wanted them planted deep inside my heart for God's purposes.

Turning Our Focus. At the same time, out from that same knowing, I find the Lord turning my thoughts just a bit regarding the remaining sessions of this study. Of truth, Ezekiel, coming right after "From Sacrifice to Church," is the exact place to turn.

And suddenly, I understand. The remainder of this course is now focused on Christian Community in its birthing. For me, personally, that turn began with Elisha, which I will share later, probably when we get to Daniel.

Before we start with Ezekiel, we must set out the four “major” prophets in their role in this same turn in God’s Heart.

From the Many to the Few. From 1463 BC, when Moses saw God as the burning bush, until 586 BC, when Jeremiah wept over a destroyed Jerusalem, a period of 877 years, God’s focus was on the many, on the entire nation of Israel.

From 586 on, God’s focus is on the remnant. Consider this, during the 3½ years of Jesus ministry, there were more Jews in Babylon than in all other places together. And there were more Jews in Egypt and across the rest of the Roman Empire than there were in Palestine.

Jesus ministered only to the remnant, neither did He send His disciples to Egypt or Babylon. We must now apply this same narrowing of focus to the Church.

And the Same Again. We can suppose that there are one billion people alive today who name themselves by Christ. A tenth part of those would be one hundred million, and that is likely a realistic number of those genuinely engaged with Jesus as Savior.

Yet a tenth part of those would be ten million, still a large number to us, but consider. – What if there were ten million people walking in all the revelation of Christ, turning the flow of this world to LIFE instead of death?

Salvation does not come through the many; it comes through the few. And here is how we place Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel

From Isaiah to Ezekiel. Isaiah prophesied of a remnant and called forth that remnant as the Church of Jesus Christ. Yet we realize that Christianity is no different than Israel, most are not truly devoted to God, and the history of Christianity in this world is not really a testimony of Christ.

It was Jeremiah, then, who wept over both the many and the few. Jeremiah set forth the return, and I am convinced that the return happened because of his tears of love.

Ezekiel, caught in the captivity, and presiding in the spirit over the departure of God from the temple in Jerusalem, set the judgment of God between the few and the many.

From Daniel to Us. Then Daniel, whose life in Babylon spanned almost exactly the seventy years set by Jeremiah, was, one might say, the apostle of the return. That is, the return began out from his prayers as he set Jeremiah's call before God.

Esther is very important in all this, as we shall see.

Finally, I have always known the restoration people and events as the testimony of God in the Old Testament regarding, not the Christian Church as a whole, but the firstfruits of Christ, and specifically, Christ Community. **The Church began as Community; the "greater" restoration** in our day is Community in completion.

Just as He Is Pure. Paul said that the experience of God with His holy ones in the Old Testament is for us now upon whom the completion of the age has come. And as we saw, the same Heart of God expressed over Jerusalem and then the restoration of a remnant, is the same Heart God has placed in us now for the completion.

Now, for the first time, I know what God meant by planting Ezekiel Chapters 1-11 deep inside my heart with tears.

As Annie Schissler said in her vision, "These sons that would give way to this new wave, must be extremely purified." And as John said, "He who has this hope in Him purifies himself just as He is pure."

Devotion. I am changing the translation of the Greek word, *halig*, in the JSV from "holy" to "devoted/devotion."

The word “holy” as it is used in most Christian thinking, has little to do with God’s meaning in the Bible. “*Halig*” means devoted to God and to the purposes of His Heart. And thus it will no longer read, “the Holy Spirit,” but rather, the Spirit of Devotion, the expression of Heart.

And thus we will not consider the contention of God coming through Ezekiel to have anything to do with external human performance, but rather the devotion of the human heart to the Father’s Heart.

Visions of God. The heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. – Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire.

Ezekiel has first placed himself at thirty years old, and among the captives in Mesopotamia. This vision comes before the fall of Jerusalem.

When I read Chapter 1 again, I find the same sense of deep knowing I wept over before, and with Ezekiel – I fall on my face, and I hear the voice of One speaking.

Jesus Revealed. It is a travail over the Church and over the birthing of the revelation of Jesus Christ upon this earth.

And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. Ezekiel saw Jesus revealed now through us, His Body; the “throne” is sharing Hheart with God.

Before I give my present understanding of “a wheel in the middle of a wheel,” let me first share the purpose of visions both in the Bible and in our experience today.

The Purpose of Visions. The job of the Spirit of Devotion is to show us Christ, not as Someone far away from us, but as the One who shares life with us, as the One written upon our hearts.

Yet Christ is Personal to each one in their place and season. A vision is nothing more than an instructor's tool. Any vision is there to be used by the Spirit to reveal Christ in that setting and among those people.

Think of a Christian community in Moravia in the early 1600's. The Spirit of God would use any vision to speak Christ to them, yet they would be hearing something that fitted their own lives. It would not be a different "word," but a different expression of that word.

The Role of Firstfruits. And so there is no such thing as a "correct" interpretation of any Biblical vision. It will remain the same word, but the Spirit will shape it to fit the human speaker and hearer. Christ written upon our hearts is what everything is all about. Your heart is more the Bible than the Bible ever could be.

The "wheel in the middle of the wheel" is the role of the firstfruits inside of and for the sake of the larger Church.

More than that, it is reflective of the role of Christian Community throughout the whole earth during the Age of Tabernacles, as the source of life for all.

The Sending of Ezekiel. Chapter 2 and 3 is the sending of Ezekiel. **"Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll.**

"Son of man, receive into your heart all My words that I speak to you, and hear with your ears. And go, get to the captives, to the children of your people, and speak to them and tell them, 'Thus says the Lord God,' whether they hear, or whether they refuse."

So the Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me.

Hear or Refuse. In this sending, God goes back and forth between telling Ezekiel that his forehead is strong against them, to telling him that his mouth will be shut so that he cannot speak. Yet the issue is hear “or” refuse to hear.

Yet we have seen that refusal is also a gift of God to us, and so we know it this way. To hear Christ and to refuse accusation – versus – to hear accusation and to refuse Christ.

The one who refuses to speak Christ does so because that one regards accusation to be higher than Christ, that is, “closer to God.”

A True Watchman. Let me point out, however, that God’s definition of a “watchman,” that He gave Ezekiel, is entirely old covenant in its expression.

It is easy to see how the same warning is then turned into our own admonition of “Know the Father through Christ written upon your heart and live.”

Nonetheless, this passage has been used as the opposite by most, to turn God’s people away from Christ and to their own human performance. Yet it is this very thing that the Ezekiel judgment of God through us now is removing. Paul said that the law of the old covenant teaches us that human performance FAILS. Life is something different.

Another Change of Focus. Then, Chapters 4-7, which I did not have you read, has to do with the siege of Jerusalem, surrounded by the Babylonian army, and God’s contention with all the children of Israel and with the inhabitants of Jerusalem in particular. Chapter 7 is God speaking His judgment against that city before it fell.

Here is something critical to understand. From Genesis 46, in 1677 BC, Jacob’s entrance into Egypt, to John 13 in 29 BC, the evening before the cross, God is focused on a small group of

people in a small geographical location. Then, from John 14 on, and especially John 17, the prayer that birthed the Kingdom, God is focused on ALL.

God's Purposes. God has two purposes in that first narrow and tribal focus. His first purpose is to prepare everything for the entrance of Jesus into our world. We will see more on that when we get to Nehemiah and Ezra.

Then, God's second purpose is to give us now a pattern that we then apply to the critical Word of Christ given to us.

Our contention is with the gospel of the serpent, not with outward human performance. All human action absent the knowledge of "Father with me for the sake of others" must be not of God, and all human action arising out from such a knowing is God's expression.

Four Abominations. Now we can place Ezekiel 8 & 9. He stretched out the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my hair; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem.

God then shows Ezekiel four abominations being performed by the inhabitants of Jerusalem inside Solomon's temple.

We transfer the meaning of these four abominations, then, into the gospel of the serpent as found in *Set My People Free*, Chapter 5 "One Verse to Rule Them All," and Chapter 6 "And in the Darkness Bind Them," and then as it is condensed in the mini-course *Safe from the Serpent's Gospel*.

Weeping for Tammuz. My purpose here, however, is not to re-teach those things, but to place ourselves now towards God's people today, as God placed Ezekiel towards His people then.

Everything in the four abominations refers to human identity, with "weeping over Tammuz" being the most telling.

Tammuz, the cross, is the son of Nimrod and Semiramis, the one who “died for the sins of the people.” Tammuz corresponds to Osiris of Egypt, the son of Ra and Isis, who “died for the sins of the people.” (Dionysus to the Greeks.) This is as the crucifix, weeping over a dead Jesus. It then correlates to weeping over the flesh that, in dying cannot “die.”

Allowing God to Belong. God told Ezekiel that all of that horror was about one thing – to make Me go far away from My sanctuary.

Here is what I just wrote in *Symmetry VI: Mankind*.

For eight years, now, I have acknowledged Father with me, sharing my life in all things – for the sake of others, with no shadow of accusation ever allowed. This is not something God “does to” me. Quite the contrary, it is something “I do” to God. – God is with me, as He is with all. There is no other possibility. But it is I who accepts that knowledge of God into my self-story, and it is I who refuses any other thought. – I am able to allow God to BELONG inside of me by absolute confidence... in the redemption of Jesus.

Driving Out the Knowledge of God. When you read/listen to Lesson 7.2 “Expression and Belonging,” then, you will see how well it fits Ezekiel’s story.

Christ lives inside of our hearts through faith SO THAT we would KNOW that we are filled with God and that we are His expression inside creation.

It is the gospel of the serpent, then, throughout all Christianity, that drives out the knowledge of God, of “Father with me for the sake of others.” From the mid AD 100’s until now, God has been “driven out” of His House by a false image formed by accusation and death. And that brings us to Ezekiel Chapter 9.

A Mark on the Forehead. Ezekiel then sees seven men approaching the temple of God, six of them have battle axes in their hands and one has a writer’s inkhorn. They stand at the altar of

sacrifice. At that point, the presence of God begins to depart from the temple, a process that is completed in Chapter 10.

Here, then, is what God tells the man who is the writer of words, **“Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.”**

For us, however, this is a weeping over the absence of the knowledge of Salvation found among our fellow Christians.

The Writing of Christ. If you want to see our part in this whole contest, then, consider again the two mini-courses, “Paul’s Gospel” versus the “Serpent’s Gospel.”

But God does not leave things in ruin; rather, He speaks through Ezekiel concerning the restoration. I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh (11:19).

As you can see, God is referencing 2 Corinthians 3:3, the writing of Christ upon our human hearts of flesh. We are writers, and writing Christ upon the heart is what we do.

Reading for Next Time. The next session is “Daniel and Devotion.” We have two sessions on Daniel. This first will be his relationship with God and the second will be a look at his visions. For the next session read Daniel 1, 6, and 9.

Daniel shows us the heart of God’s firstfruits.

I, Daniel, understood... Jeremiah... Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. – O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city **and Your people are called by Your name.”**

Let's Pray Together. We are calling God into our world, and we are calling Him first as judgment inside God's HOUSE!

There can be NO fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles in the life of the Church – millions of believers in Jesus walking now as the Salvation of God in the earth – apart from a sword passing through and splitting apart between Paul's gospel and the serpent's gospel in the Christian heart. Or, as Ezekiel and John the Baptist called it, an AXE!

“Father, we sit here inside Your presence, inside Your Seat of Mercy, and we place all our brothers and sisters in Christ, here upon the Blood upon our hearts, entirely inside of You.

Together with You. “Inside this Seat of Judgment, Father God, we call You as Judgment into Your Church and for the sake of Your name in the hearts of many.

“O God, our Father, the mental identities of our brethren are focused upon the flesh and upon death, even as they imagine that such thinking is ‘salvation’ and even as they worship an image of superiority.

“Father, together with You, we speak forgiveness upon all. Father, together with You, we strike down the power of the gospel of the serpent over the minds of our brethren. Father, together with You, we speak Paul's wondrous gospel of Christ our life into their understanding.

Father, You Belong. “Father, we welcome You, here, inside Your temple, inside our hearts. Father, You belong with us; You belong through us; and You belong inside our world.

“Father, we want no more world without Your presence welcome and known.

“Father, we have wept over the false knowledge in our brothers and sisters, and You have sealed us with Your name written upon our hearts. And Father, with the all-authority that You have given to the Jesus of our hearts, we speak the release of our brethren from all darkness, and the arising of Christ inside their knowing.”