

# 026 Would Ezekiel stand a Chance? Part 1

Here I have the greatest of pleasure's introducing my own Brother Bill. – He is the one who does all the proof reading and the one we blame for any wording and spelling mistakes!!!

Although he has not been in “the ministry”, as the old traditional thought has been, yet he has been in ministry all his life serving as Deacon, Elder and wise counselor to so many Church leaders.

We are living in the days of Ezekiel and Jeremiah, who prophesied that God can allow disaster on a nation if that nation continually chooses to walk according to its own plans, and turn away from righteousness. Remember, God also used the Children of Israel as examples and a presentation of His dealings with ALL nations and in ALL generations - that includes today.

God spoke this to Jeremiah: 18.7 – 12

*“The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.*

*“Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you. Return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.””*

*And they said, “... We will walk according to our own plans, and we will every one obey the dictates of his evil heart” (NKJV)*

It is from this position my brother shares the passion of his heart for the church and the nations of today. His contribution is from a very God and Biblical centered life, and has much insight and pearls of wisdom to share. I suggest you pay close attention and take heed as he shares from his perspective of someone in the congregation – not up front as leader. Be warned however, he is even more blunt and forthright than I am, he shoots straight and direct, but he speaks from genuine passion and concern for God's people.

# Would EZEKIEL have stood a better chance in our churches today?

Bill Holdstock

## Study one the commission.

Ezekiel was given a commission from God to warn the Children of Israel of their sin and rebellion towards their God. Israel was in a backslidden state and had turned away in disobedience to God's laws. They had brought back wives from other Nations; they had brought back idol gods of those Nations and gave them pride of place in their homes. Their sin was constant and deepening hardness against God and rebellion against His word.

Ezekiel was inspired by the Holy Spirit, who gave him messages to preach, and mimes to perform, all given by direct revelation.

Of the 40 mimes in Scripture 25 are by Ezekiel to be given to God's people Israel with the sole purpose to bring the ungodly wayward Jews to repentance that they might avert any further judgment from God: to encourage the Godly ones to continue to be true to Him: to punish other Nations who had contributed to Israel's downfall and to reveal a future restoration of the Nation and the eternal reign of their Messiah.

Chapter 1. King James Version of the Bible throughout the study.

Ezekiel was with the Jewish captives in Babylon by the river of Chebar the modern day Khabour that flows into the river Euphrates. In a vision he saw the heavens opened. This simple sentence tells us that sometimes the heavens are shut, no doubt to the sin of the world and the rebellion of man and as God cannot look upon sin well may He shut the heavens. At this time Ezekiel saw they were opened.

*Ezekiel 1;*

*V.3 The Word of the Lord came expressly to Ezekiel the priest and the hand of the Lord was upon him.*

There is no doubt that those who are seeking after God and who have ears to hear whether in "captivity" or not can receive a vision or message from an open heaven no matter if you are a member of a church, or house group or a Leader or Pastor (and I use the word 'Pastor' – Shepherd - in the true Biblical sense of the word that Bob has so plainly laid out). In fact Leaders and Pastors should seek an open heaven to receive the right word of God for the congregation.

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Unfortunately the body of Christ is starved of teaching that comes *expressly* from the Lord. Much comes from ready-made sermons on the Internet or current books of the day and the hand of the Lord is seldom to be seen or felt by starving Saints.

The heavens are always open to those hungry to hear what God has to say and He wants only His word to be passed on.

There is another problem; our ears are so full of worldly junk, from screaming, shouting television or radio programs, from our own thoughts, ideas, and opinions to the soft whisper of a friend persuading you down the wrong path.

Jesus tells us that it is in the still small voice that He will speak to us and guess what, we will have to be quiet, shut our mouths and in an attitude of prayer and openness to the Spirit to be able to hear what He has to say.

Ezekiel was a Priest, a Pastor, Leader, Shepherd as well as a Prophet of God. May all our modern day "Priests" seek to get next Sunday's message "Expressly" from the Lord and the body of Christ pray that the hand of the Lord be upon them.

*V4 And I looked and saw a whirlwind come out of the North.*

Ezekiel saw living creatures that had the likeness of a man, these were on a mission to Israel's advantage to warn the Jews of God's coming Judgment if they ignored Ezekiel's message. We are reminded that another Judgment upon the world will come from the North in the last days in the form of a mighty army headed by the Antichrist. In both cases there is need of repentance before God to avert His wrath.

The rest of Chapter 1 is about God in all His glory. Who can describe God, who can understand Him? Our fallen state prohibits us from doing so, however as our study is about God's Prophet and his mission to the Children of Israel I would like to start at chapter 2.

## **Ezekiel's Commission**

*Ezekiel 2:1*

*And He said unto me Son of man stand upon your feet...*

The Hebrew for son of man is Ben Adam or son of Adam. This term is used of Ezekiel 100 times always without the definite article. In the New Testament it is used of Christ 88 times always with the definite article.

Without the definite article, the term denotes a human natural decent of Adam, with it denotes the last Adam. The first Adam forfeited by sin and disobedience, his right of universal dominion over the earth...

*Gen 1:26*

*26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*

...the last Adam Jesus Christ, retrieved that dominion from the hands of Satan by the shedding of His blood on the cross opening the way to eternal life for all who will believe on His name.

*Verse 2. And the Spirit entered into me when He spoke to me and set me upon my feet...*

This refers to Ezekiel being given the Holy Spirit so as to perform this special commission. It is not the same as the Baptism with the Holy Spirit that was available after the Cross of Christ

*John 14:17*

*17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but ye know him; for he dwells with you, and shall be in you.*

*Ezekiel 2: 3. And He said unto me, son of Man I send you to the Children of Israel, to a rebellious Nation that has rebelled against Me: they and their fathers have transgressed against Me even to this day.*

Ezekiel is addressed as “son of man” not as a son of Abraham because Israel was now Lo-Ammi. Hosea tells us that he was commanded by God to take a wife of Whoredoms. This word actually means children of idolatry, but she was also a prostitute, so Hosea chose Gomer and they had children one of which was named by God Himself.

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*(Hos:1v 9) Then God said, call his name Lo-ammi: for you are not my people.*

Gomer was a picture or type of Israel and as she left Hosea to go back to her past sinning, likewise Israel had left God for the same thing. It would seem that God had run out of patience and now Israel was Lo-ammi and God was telling Ezekiel “*They are not my people and I am not their God*”.

This happened before in Exodus Chapter 32 the children of Israel so frustrated God that he said to Moses in verse 9

*...I have seen this people and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore let Me alone that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them and I will make of you a great Nation.*

*Moses besought the Lord his God and said LORD why does Your wrath wax hot against YOUR people which YOU have brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand?*

*Verse 14 The Lord repented of the evil that He thought to do unto His people.*

In verse 7 of that chapter The Lord said to Moses who was in the mountain:

*Go get you down for YOUR people which YOU have brought out of Egypt...*

God was so fed up and disappointed with Israel that He wanted to pass them over to Moses and have nothing more to do with them. The history of the Children of Israel was a disappointment to God.

Now in Ezekiel this Nation was being given yet another chance under the hand of God’s Prophet. What a merciful and gracious God we serve?

As you read the Bible story in Ezekiel and compare these notes, can you feel the ache in God’s heart? Can you feel His frustration and sorrow, even to the point of Holy anger towards the people He loves so much?

He had done so many miracles for them after bringing them out of 400 years of slavery, but they were, in God’s own words a rebellious, stiff-necked, impudent nation.

Can you think of other Nations who are acting just the same way today? What about the Nation where you live? What about the City or Town or even the church you go to.

Do you recognise attitudes similar to the Children of Israel? If you are not sure, buy a newspaper tomorrow or turn on the news, you will see murders, crime, cheating, broken homes and marriages, children left at home on their own until parents get home from work, or the pub! Thoughts about Jesus, thoughts about eternity, Salvation, care for others “No I am too busy”

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*Verse 4.*

*For they are impudent children and stiff-necked. I do send you unto them; and you shall say to them, Thus says the LORD GOD.*

The name LORD GOD in Hebrew is Adonai Jehovah one of the highest names of God and it occurs 214 times. Ezekiel was to speak in that all-powerful name, as if God was speaking to them in person.

Ministers who preach and teach in our churches today must, for the sake of the “stiff-necked” and sometimes “rebellious” congregations preach and teach from the Bible under the authority and in the power of the LORD GOD Adonai Jehovah. You are teaching in the place of and representing The Lord God Almighty.

Please remember that many congregations *do* know the voice of God when they hear it. What they do with what that voice says is up to them. It is their choice as it was Israel’s.

British Bob’s and my father was a strict preacher. He knew and preached the Word of God and did not embellish it. He often said, “If I have offended you please remember I have given you God’s word, if you don’t like it take it up with Him!”

If the modern Preachers sought God and obtained their message “expressly” from God and didn’t fill in, they need not fear the “looks or the words” from any rebellious people because you have given God’s word and any argument should be addressed to God. You may like to warn them that to argue with God could well back fire! We shall see in a later chapter if you tell them with a word *Expressly from the Lord* you have relinquished your responsibility.

*Verse 5*

*And they, whether they will hear or not for they are rebellious yet they will know that there has been a Prophet among them.*

How many Saints leave church after a meeting knowing they have been listening to a Prophet of God who has built them up in spirit, been encouraged in the fight to stand up for truth and righteousness in the work place, taught to be over comers. Having been challenged to walk closer to Jesus, to be more like Jesus and be strong in their faith?

Ezekiel was commanded of God to preach His word, not once did God say you can fill in the spaces with what you think or your opinion, or what you have got off the Internet.

My thoughts and comments are mainly to Pastors and Leaders many known to the writer, who just do not appreciate the responsibility they have to shepherd and nurture those God has put in their care. The eternal destiny of their congregation is upon their shoulders, and yes it is a tuff job and weighs heavy.

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But just imagine for a second or two when your congregation gets to the throne of God and He asks, for instance “why did you not encourage your workmates to know ME”? And they answer “Dear Lord *I* did not know you, let alone encourage others”

There is a scripture that says something about God saying to those who came late and unprepared to the Lord’s Marriage supper in

*Matthew 25 v 12,  
I know you not*

**Today there are millions in church, but not in Christ.**

Time and space will not allow me to dwell on the fact that there are two Spirits at war in the heavens, the Spirit of God and the spirit of darkness, good and evil if you prefer.

It is not easy to remember at the time of any spiteful comment or any bad behaviour from church members that Jesus told His disciples, that bad behaviour is directed to God because the source of that behaviour is NOT from the person or persons involved but from that spirit, from the devil himself, who uses a human to cause trouble. Encourage yourselves Pastors and follow this thought through.

Verse 6

*And you son of man be not afraid of them neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with you and you dwell among scorpions be not afraid of their words nor dismayed at their looks...*

Please don’t get cross with me for my comments. Verse 6 is what God thought about *His* “congregation,” but He loved them enough to take the time and trouble to remind them of their sin and prepare a man to go to extraordinary lengths to bring them back to Himself.

Maybe when a man is ordained into the ministry of the Lord this verse should be read over him instead of the very nice things that seem to come from nowhere.

Maybe those praying over the new minister should clearly say “there will be briers and thorns and you will preach among scorpions but don’t be afraid!”

Don’t you think the new Pastor might want a bit longer to think about it!

At least Ezekiel was warned about his future “church” ministry dealing with a rebellious bunch of scorpions. God didn’t mince His words or His thoughts about the people He was sending Ezekiel to.

What an awful bunch of people they were.

God was warning Ezekiel not to be afraid of their words. Wow! How untimely, ill spoken words can pierce to the very soul and cause such heartache. Some church members are masters of the art!

*Though briers and thorns be with you and you dwell among scorpions!*

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My guess is that many Pastors and Leaders can identify with that verse and some may even say they are all in my church now!

Remember Israel's rebellion was against God and the hurtful remarks you get from your members are really addressed to God and are from the pit. They don't look at it like that. You don't look at it like that, but God does and will give you grace to overcome as he did the Prophet.

God was preparing Ezekiel for what he was going to find in his new congregation. We shall soon see to what extent and what depth that preparation took.

We shall also see, if you haven't given up on me yet, there is also a great responsibility required from the congregations. (Was that a sigh of relief I heard just then?)

But just before we look at how Israel responded to God's words through Ezekiel, let's look at how God prepared Ezekiel further.

God was not going to let His Prophet go into the fight without proper preparation.

*Verse 7.*

*And you shall speak My words whether they will hear or whether they will forbear (ignore it). Unfortunately lots of congregations forbear!*

Pastors, Leaders, and Teaches must preach God's word from the Bible and stick to it. So many times I have heard the preacher start off with the word of God and very soon he or she has introduced a story, a testimony, a, what I did when I was young etc. Even left the platform walked among the people and then admitted, "now where was I" and had to walk back to the rostrum to read from the notes he has forgotten.

Do you think the Children of Israel would have stood for that from Ezekiel? They would have laughed at him and not been impressed at all.

Our congregations are more gracious, but must not be taken for granted. OK some stories, some testimonies illustrate the Word God has given you. Jesus made good use of parables but God was very serious with His instruction to His Prophet and very serious about His people

*Verse 8*

*But you son of man, hear what I say unto you: Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house open your mouth and eat what I give you.*

Be not rebellious like that rebellious house is a warning to Ezekiel to guard his own natural weaknesses.

Ezekiel had to be strong in his own faith in God, but only God knew the extent His Prophet's testing was going to be. There was no one else he could call on, talk things over with, to get a second opinion. It was going to be a lonely commission. He had to KNOW His God.

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Congregations everywhere must recognise that the Leader's position is a lonely place to be. Some have asked for Prayer from my wife and I, admitting loneliness and some, believe it or not, insecurity.

The Church must pray and hold up those Holy hands and ask God to give the Leader that Word *expressly* each week. If you don't do your part and pray and intercede for your Pastor you cannot complain if you think the service is boring!

My thoughts in this study are to encourage Leaders and Pastors to study the Bible more and God wanted that as well for Ezekiel.

Verse 9,10

*And when I looked behold a hand was sent unto me, and lo a roll of a book was therein. And He spread it before me and it was written within and without with lamentations morning and woe.*

What on earth happened next? See next study.