

027 Would Ezekiel stand a Chance? Part 2

Would Ezekiel have stood a better chance in our churches today?

Ezekiel Study Part 2.

Chapter 2. The King James Version of the Bible throughout.

In the last verse of Chapter 2.

The Lord spread before Ezekiel a Roll or Scroll it was written within and without: and there was written lamentations, mourning and woe. Moreover He said unto me Son of man eat that you find, eat this roll and go and speak to the House of Israel.

These scrolls were animal skins sewed together to make a long piece and rolled up from each end. The writing was usually on one side of the scroll but the scroll that Ezekiel was to eat, writing was found on both sides, “within and without” expressing the abundance of message the Lord wanted to tell His people. Both sides were full of lamentations, mourning and woes.

We can quite imagine the writing was much the same as we read in Ezekiel in our Bibles today. God was expressing His heart to them in love and longing but also warning them of the consequences of their continued sin.

The word lamentation in Hebrew includes in it’s meaning ‘weeping’ or ‘to weep’ God weeps over the spiritual condition of His Children not just Israel in Ezekiel’s day but also Israel and His Church today. We cannot point the finger at Israel, now or then and with a holier than thou attitude say “I thank God we are not like them because we go to church and pray three times on a Sunday” Someone did that in Jesus’ day and He condemned him for his pride.

Mourning includes weeping, to be grieved, pained, to howl. Woe is much the same but more associated with sorrow. It would seem that God was deeply moved over His beloved people, He would not have written this down on scrolls and told Ezekiel to eat it if He didn’t care.

Oral Roberts the well known and revered evangelist and founder of the Oral Roberts University, was awakened in the night by the Lord and as they talked Oral Roberts asked “when are you coming back Lord?” the Lord said “I cannot come back yet because of the state of My Church”. I have a DVD of the interview when he shared that on television. I don’t know about you but I choked on that.

New Testament or 21st Century Church?
A Ministry of Wave of Life Ministries

Do you realise that if the Church was in a better place, if God's people were living a narrower more Holy Christian life, The Lord may well have returned by now. Sobering thought!

We read about the Children of Israel and read what God says about them and we smugly agree and wonder how they could be so ignorant of God's love and blessings and reject Him so, but our nations are just as bad and sometimes worse. We are this side of the cross, we have the knowledge of Jesus' death, salvation, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the whole Bible written in our languages, the Holy Spirit to guide and open the Scriptures to us, Godly men and women to teach us and more, but are we any better than Israel in Ezekiel's day?

NO we are not! We can sum up the Nation's condition before the Lord and that is impudent, wicked, and rebellious towards God. May God have mercy on us.

Chapter 3.

Having been given the scroll full of lamentations, mourning and woes God told Ezekiel to eat it!

Verse 2: & 3.

So I opened my mouth and He caused me to eat that roll. And He said unto me Son of man cause thy belly to eat and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then I did eat it and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.

God wanted Ezekiel to get His word deep into his heart, to be so acquainted with God's words that Ezekiel felt the heartache of God and to feel as it were, as disappointed with the Children of Israel as God was. He said it was sweet as honey to his lips. To a born again spirit filled Christian the Bible is sweet and pleasant to read and study but even to a Born again Christian God's Word becomes sour in the belly if sin is present anywhere and the conscience is stirred.

If teachers of the Bible today are not willing to open their mouths and "eat God's Word" getting it deep into their bellies, asking the Holy Spirit to help them understand what is written before they even dare to represent the Lord God to His Church from a platform, they will become a sounding brass or tinkling symbol. The Saints in the congregation do not want that, they deserve better. You are standing in the place of God and His Son Jesus Christ and representing all of Heaven to your people and He says to you:

2.Timothy 2: 15

"Study to show yourself approved of God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed"

New Testament or 21st Century Church?
A Ministry of Wave of Life Ministries

You may think the writer has no place to criticise, or write such things but I believe the body of Christ is hungry for the truth of God's Word and help in understanding and living it. In these last days before the Lord returns the Spiritual condition of His church is the responsibility of the Leaders and Pastors...who else?

Maybe your "study" is not approved of your congregation let alone approved of God. There is no point in asking God to make your face a flint or a diamond to overcome the "looks" of the people unless you are sure you are giving God's message and not yours in which case you will be equipped by the Holy Spirit to be faithful to Him. What the Lord said to Oral Roberts needs to be read again...prayerfully.

Of course many Pastors and teachers do study, do wait on the Lord and their teaching is rich with true insight and understanding. I know some who spend hours in a room in prayer to get God's Word for their church. I know one Pastor who studied in a shed at the bottom of his garden and spent so much time laid out before the Lord he had to put a bell push from house to shed so his wife could check on him from time to time. He is Pastor of a very big church, and his ministry is worldwide!

Verse 8:9:

Behold I have made your face strong against their faces and your forehead against their foreheads.

9. As an adamant harder than flint have I made your forehead fear them not neither be dismayed at their looks though they be a rebellious house.

God equipped Ezekiel for the hard work he was to do. He would have to be bold, hard, stubborn, unyielding and be true to the Word that God had given him. God had made Ezekiel's forehead like a diamond the hardest of the stones. It was necessary to become strong in God for this task to combat Israel's hardheartedness.

Jeremiah had the same problem with Israel as Ezekiel.

Jeremiah 17:1

The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron and with a point of a diamond it is graven upon the table of their heart and upon the horns of their altars.

The pen of iron indicates the chiseling into hard rock with a hammer, with the point of a diamond upon the table of their hearts and the horns of their altars. These horns were the horns of the idols brought back from other nations and copies made to worship in their houses. Josiah had destroyed all these but Jehoiakim permitted them to be made and collected again during his 11-year reign (1 Kings 23.37).

Verse 12, 13 Then the Spirit took me up and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing saying blessed be the Glory of the Lord from this place. And I heard also noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another and the noise of wheels over against them.

New Testament or 21st Century Church?
A Ministry of Wave of Life Ministries

At this moment the Holy Spirit took complete control of Ezekiel and energized him, gave him power and ability to do God's work, all the movement of the wheels and the heavenly creatures Ezekiel became a part of in his vision. Isn't it amazing how God wants us to be involved in His work on earth?

Verse 14 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.

The Prophet was bitter towards his own people Israel at their attitude against Adonai Jehovah and His message to them, this anger was inspired by God so that Ezekiel could see and feel Israel's sin and rebellion from God's viewpoint. "*But the hand of the Lord was strong upon me*" There is no doubt that Ezekiel was strengthened divinely by the Holy Spirit for his mission which would be very difficult indeed.

The Spirit took him to the River Chebar again and there he met the captives and remained among them seven days. He said he was astonished, I believe the Lord planned the stay for seven days to give Ezekiel who now had his Spiritual eyes open, a personal experience of Israel's behaviour and their continued sins and rebellion towards God. Ezekiel knew that each man and woman was to stand before God and give account of their actions and no doubt as each day passed he felt the bitterness towards Satan rise within him. At the end of seven days the Word of the Lord came to him again.

Verse 17

Son of man I have made you a watchman unto the House of Israel: therefore hear the word at My mouth and give them warning from Me."

In these days of pressure with time at a premium, with buses and trains to catch to work, children to get to school there is, in the natural little time for study, but we MUST make time for study, the truths in the Bible are far more important than many of the things we put before God. We need to read the Bible slowly. Look at the verse above.

Son of man I have made you a Watchman, None other than God almighty creator of Heaven and earth and His Son Jesus Christ has made us Watchmen over His people. A Watchman is a person placed on a high lookout with a view to warn of impending danger or give information good or bad. Isn't that exactly what Pastors and Leaders should do? Give warning good and bad to the congregation of the wrath of God if we don't live right. We are told to hear the *Word at His mouth* and pass it on to the people in a warning from God Himself! How awesome, what a responsibility! But He wasn't finished yet He said:

Verse 18;

When I say to the wicked you will surely die and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked ways to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at your hand.

New Testament or 21st Century Church?
A Ministry of Wave of Life Ministries

The Bible says that sin carries the death penalty unless a man repents, *the wages of sin is death*, there is no automatic work of grace offering forgiveness without repentance and putting away that sin by faith in the Lord Jesus' shed blood on the cross.

Jesus has already given the sinner warning that the wicked will surely die in many places in His Word the Bible. To save himself from the responsibility of having a lost man's blood on his hands the Pastors must warn the wicked. (As my father used to say, "If you don't like what I preach- take it up with the Lord, it's His Word") I feel I must say the same.

Now here's a couple of verses to wrestle with... or is it?

Verse 20

When a righteous man does turn from his righteousness and commit iniquity and I lay a stumbling block before him he shall die: because you have not given him warning he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness shall not be remembered but his blood shall be required at your hand.

Verse 21 Nevertheless if you warn the righteous man that the righteous sin not, and he does not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned also you have delivered your soul.

In my own personal opinion this passage along with others lays to rest the belief in Unconditional Eternal Security or Once Saved Always Saved as it is sometimes known. This is another subject but we are not under the Law when this might have been appropriate we are under grace and we must not put Christ to open shame as it say's in Hebrews.

Heb 6:6

6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

Ezekiel 3:22.

And the hand of the Lord was there upon me, and He said unto me "Arise go forth into the plain and I will talk with you there"

In the Hebrew the "plain" means "low place reached with difficulty and through obstacles" and I thank God that even in the low place the Lord is there waiting to talk with us. It may be in the low place that we are devoid of all self-sufficiency, self-ability and just plain self!

When we feel empty in our Spirits and have come to the end of our rope as it were, we find the Lord is already there and in that empty condition He can Minister to us and give us a fresh impartation of the Holy Spirit.

On a personal note if I may. Some years ago I was in bed with double pneumonia and pleurisy and the Doctors telling me I should be in hospital I found it difficult to breathe. I asked the Lord why He had allowed me to be so ill and so low. He said, "I want to fill up your emptiness not top up your fullness" If you want the truth that hurt!

New Testament or 21st Century Church?
A Ministry of Wave of Life Ministries

It is when we are empty of ourselves when we are in the “low place,” maybe reached with “difficulty and obstacles,” the Lord can do something with our lives because we have let go.

Verse 23

*I arose and went forth into the plain and the Glory of the Lord stood there...
And I fell on my face.*

In the plain or low places of our lives there will always be the Glory of the Lord. He will never leave us nor forsake us, it's just that we don't see or feel Him there. When we do see Him there, it is well that we fall on our face in humble surrender. It would appear that it is a scriptural thing for people to fall under the Power of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 24

*Then the Spirit entered into me and set me upon my feet...and said go shut yourself within your house. But thou, O son of man behold they shall put bands upon you and shall bind you with them and you shall not go out among them. And I will make your tongue cleave to the roof of your mouth that you shall be dumb and you shall not be to them a reprover for they are a rebellious house. BUT when I speak with thee I will open your mouth and you shall say **THUS SAYS THE LORD GOD** and he that hears let him hear and he that forbears (ignores) let him ignore.*

Ezekiel was shut up in his house for a length of time, how long we are not told but the ministering creatures put restraints on Ezekiel, bands on him, caused him to be dumb; unable to speak all he could do was to meditate on what God was doing in his life.

As we have already said there must be a place and a time of quietness, shut away from the hustle and bustle of every day life to meditate on what God has or is saying to us. This gives the Holy Spirit chance to embed His message deep into our beings so when we are called upon to speak to people we have God's word so deep into our spirit that we only speak His words and don't have any of our own.

BUT when I speak with you... there is something about that word BUT. When all seems in despair, when all seems lost and hopeless God comes up with a BUT! *But when I speak with you I will open your mouth.* God was to release Ezekiel fully into his ministry to the Children of Israel.

What on earth happen next... next study will tell you some very strange things.