

The Book of Ezekiel (21-40)

Author: Rev. C. J. McKnight

21

We note also that these two, Moses and Elijah are used to enlighten the people of their generation, past, present and future. They were a light to their generations and will be a very a special enlightenment to those alive during the great tribulation. rev.11:2 That their testimony is effective is witnessed by John on Patmos. He saw a group standing on what appeared to him to be a sea of glass, mingled with fire. They were victorious over the beast and refused to receive his mark, name or number. Rev. 15:2 Their nationally is seen in the fact that they sing the song of Moses. That they have accepted Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah is also apparent for they sing the song of the Lamb. Rev. 15:3 They will not be born again believers but as under the first half of the seventieth week, or the three and one half years of the ministry of Christ, they will be saved by faith alone.

The area over the heads of the living creatures was as the appearance of crystal of such a magnitude that it invoked reverence and honor from those who saw it. Eze. 1:22 It was of great expanse, much like we see the vastness of the sky above us. It was akin to Isaiah's vision of the throne, high and lifted up. Isa. 6:1 John told of his vision of a sea of glass like crystal seen before the throne of the Lord. Rev. 4:6 The new Jerusalem, the true Holy city, will gleam with the visible glory of the Lord for she too is as clear as crystal. Rev. 21:11 The light, the glory of the Lord shining forth from His glorious presence will be reflected by all this which is likened unto crystal. The whole of heaven and the city of the Most High will scintillate, shine forth the great and marvelous light, which is our God. He is light in its absolute, unequivocal, independent eternal state. The greatness and the beauty of it is beyond our imagination. Ezekiel then saw in this vast expanse over the heads of the living creatures the throne of the Lord. Eze. 1:26

The movement of the living creatures created a sound, or a voice was heard. It would be anticipated, in light of who these living creatures are, that there would be a sound, a voice coming from them. In their lifetime on earth they were the spokesmen of the Lord. Incidentally,

the word translated sound here, is to call or a voice. Eze. 1:24 The sound of great waters, like the roaring of a huge waterfall, a sound filling the air and drowning out all other sound. John saw Him and heard His voice as the sound of many waters (plural), a great flow of waters. Rev. 1:15 When John heard that voice again it was so loud, so commanding, that he added to his impression of it as sounding like thunder. Rev. 14:2 The next time he heard it he called it mighty thundering's (plural) and like the sound of a great multitude of people. Rev. 19:6.

22

Along with the voice which proceeded from the living creatures there is also a voice heard from the firmament which was over them. This was truly the voice of the Lord. A voice like no other voice ever heard. It is the voice of supreme authority. A voice of vital importance to those who would follow the Lord. The fullness of that voice is heard today in the Word of the Lord , our Bibles. When mankind walks contrary to that which He speaks, then like Adam and Eve, we hide ourselves from the presence of the Lord. Gen. 3:8 On the other hand, if we diligently hearken, not casually nor half heartedly, and are obedient to His Word, there is a blessing to be obtained.

Not only does He promise healing but the promise contains health for the obedient. He is the Lord who heals but He also will keep one from the diseases common to this life. Ex. 15:26 The key is in complete obedience.

The promise of the Lord to the church at Laodicea was directed at those who would overcome the lethargy found in that church which is so representative of today's church. The last day church which will develop into the Bride of Christ, will come out of this lethargic, pleasure loving, end time church. She will be granted the privilege of sitting with Him in His throne, which is also the Father's throne. Rev. 3:23 Consider the vastness of that throne when the Word state that heaven is His throne. That embraces the whole of heaven, so, to be in heaven is to dwell eternally in the atmosphere of His throne. Acts 7:49 The question is then asked, where is the house that you would build unto me. Beautiful sanctuaries, cathedrals, church buildings however grand are not that which He is seeking. He does not rest nor abide in temples made with the hands of men, regardless of how impressed we

are with their beauty. Acts 7:48 He is building a church, a sanctuary of His own making where He can rest and find a love which is like His very own.

That which the Father has commissioned the Son to create is eternal and everlasting. It cannot be corrupted for sin will never be seen in that holy and righteous kingdom. Heb. 1:8 The prophet Zechariah spoke of Him and His work of building the true temple of the Lord. Zech. 6:13 He also declared Jesus, the Son, to be the vessel in which the glory of the Lord would be revealed. His dual ministry is that of the King of kings while also fulfilling the office of the great high priest. Just think, He will establish a kingdom where there will never be heard a dissenting voice of any kind. It is a kingdom of people who have been perfected and are led by the King of perfection.

23

The throne of heaven, the throne of the Lord is expressed as appearing over and above the four living beings. His throne is the throne of holiness and all who are associated with it are also holy in His sight. Ps. 47:8 It is spoken of as being the throne which is the source of justice and judgment, the root and fountainhead of mercy and truth.

Ps. 89:14

The One who possesses the key, the power, the authority to the house of David was declared and destined to become a glorious throne to His Father's house. The prophet foresaw the Lord Jesus as an established nail, situated as a secure peg. He was to become a throne of glory, or to glorify the throne. Jesus, as the son of man, spoke of sitting upon the throne of His glory. Mt. 19:28 Here all the glory of the Father's house will be displayed in Him. Isa. 22:24 The offspring and the posterity are those belonging to the son of man. Isaiah also proclaimed that of the increase of His government there would be no end. A never ending government with never ending offshoots. Isa. 22:24 (NIV) (Posterity. NKJV) There is found here a very interesting revelation which was given to Isaiah. Isa. 9:7 Likewise all the instruments, the mannerism of worship is according to His leadership. Everything hinged on the Lord Jesus accomplishing His mission of salvation by hanging on a tree. The peg which was cut down and a burden and responsibility was concluded. Isa. 22:23-25

Jesus called the throne of heaven His Father's throne but at the same time said that it was His throne. It is very apparent from all that is stated in the Word that there is but one throne. Rev. 3:21 Furthermore, He promised those who overcame in this life that they too would be seated with Him, on His throne. John was subsequently shown the established, unmovable throne of the Lord and there was but one sitting on the throne. Rev. 4:2 This involves the mystery of that which pertains to God. 1 Tim. 3:16 The unity, the unison, the harmony found in the Godhead obviously is beyond the ability of man to comprehend or surely there would not be any disagreement as to the nature and being of God. He is one. Deut. 6:4 Jesus concurred and quoted the same scripture. Mark 12:29 Jesus spoke of the unity by saying; "My Father and I are one." John 10:30 His statement was not to make the two, one person or entity, but to demonstrate that the Spirit of Father was in Him and He, by the Spirit, was in the Father. The triunity of God is stated in 1 John 5:8 The Father, the Word, the Spirit and these three agree as one. Absolutely no disunity of any kind is to be found in them.

24

The throne of the color of sapphire. The sapphire of the Bible is of a deep blue color. Which is very fitting for the color of the Holy Spirit is blue. The stone is noted as being a hard stone which shines brilliantly and is expensive. Eze. 1:26 The ability of the sapphire to receive a high polish is referred to by Solomon in Ecc. 4:7 Its value is equated with that of gold. Job 28:16 Moses, his brother and nephews plus the seventy elders of Israel saw a similar scene where the foundation of the throne was sapphire as clear as the sky itself. Ex.24:10 We may be certain that these are true colors, unpolluted by an atmosphere such as we have. Their beauty will be beyond our expectation. Incidentally, these descriptions of that which is heavenly may be used to evaluate the report of those who supposedly have gone to heaven and then returned.

The spiritual importance of the sapphire stone may be found in its usage as one of the twelve stones in the breastplate of the high priest where it represented one of the tribes of Israel. Ex. 28:18 As Aaron wore the breastplate the spiritual responsibility and care of the twelve tribes was on his heart, so with the great high priest, the Lord Jesus. His people are always on His heart. In a word picture penned by Isaiah

he prophesied pertaining to the experiences of the last day church, the Bride. The foundation of that last house will be of sapphires, the beauty and glory of the Lord. Isa. 54:11 This is illuminated and emphasized by Rev. 21:19 where it appears as one of the foundations of the New Jerusalem. The stone was one of the precious stones used as the decoration of Lucifer. The one who appeared to Eve in all of his splendor and deceived her. Eze. 28:13

The MAN upon the throne, please place an emphasis on the fact that there is seen a man and that man could only be Christ Jesus, our Lord. Eze. 1:26 Therefore it is not strange that John likewise saw one sitting upon the throne. Rev. 4:2 There is only one man of whom it may be said that He is God and that is the man Jesus, the Son of God, the son of man. God is made manifest in the person of the Lord Jesus. 1 Tim. 3:16 The Lord Jesus came in the image and likeness of His Father, God. 2 Cor. 4:4 So exacting was the likeness that He was able to say that if any man has seen Him they have seen His Father. John 14:9 Jesus came at the instigation of His Father and performed the will and works of the Father. John 9:4 John 10:32 Jesus also declared that He was in the Father and the Father in Him. John 14:10 Remembering then that God is a Spirit (John 4:24) we understand that the Father who is a spirit and the Holy Spirit, by spirit, dwelt within the Lord Jesus in absolute fullness. Col. 2:9 He is the physical, visible evidence of God.

25

That God would chose to reveal Himself in the physical body of a man, the man Christ Jesus, is an amazing thing. 1 Tim. 2:5 Fallen man stood in dire need of a mediator, a contact between the Lord and himself. The one who is the eternal Word voluntarily, because of the great love of the Lord, and offered Himself to become a man, to be the only sacrifice acceptable to God. In this manner He restored fellowship between fallen man and a Holy God. 1 Tim. 2:6 That Word, in His eternal status was not flesh and blood, but was an eternal Spirit. John 1:14 The substance, the composition, the make up of that which is spiritual is greatly different from that of man. The physical body of man is mortal and will die, thus returning to the dust of which it was created. The spirit is eternal and like the Lord will exist forever, either in heaven or hell.

God is a Spirit. The true Spirit. The eternal, everlasting Spirit. John 4:24 That makes the spiritual realm to be of far greater value and importance than the natural world in which we live. The spiritual world is invisible to the natural eye. Nevertheless, the Lord has chose to reveal His character by placing a witness and testimony of who and what He is in all of His creation. Rom. 1:20 There are many things in this created world which show us the singleness of the Lord while at the same time manifesting His triunity. The most common of them all is the ultimate of His creation, mankind. We were created in the image and likeness of the Godhead. Gen. 1:26 The Lord, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit in making mankind created a triune being. One who is body, soul and spirit. 1 Thess. 5:23 Thus giving us a perfect and constant example of the being and nature of the Lord, who is one, yet three, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The reason Ezekiel saw one, a man sitting on the throne, Eze. 1:26 is the same with John in the Revelation. Rev. 4:2 Paul stated that Jesus was the image of the invisible God. Col. 1:15 So exact and perfect was He in His image of the Father that He was able to say that if man had seen Him, they had seen the Father. John 6:46 He is the visible temple of the invisible God, whom no man has seen, nor can see. However, through the revelation of the Word, all that the Lord is, may be plainly seen. The Lord Jesus is the physical, resurrected and glorified house of the Spiritual being known as God. Forever, permanently abiding in Him is to be found the fullness, all that the Lord is and ever will be, the eternal Godhead. Col. 2:9 Most assuredly the eternal things of Him are clearly made visible.

26

The man of the fullness of the glory of the Lord seen as the occupant of the throne of heaven. He is seen as having the color of amber. The translation of this word varies from the yellow color of our amber today to the shining of a compound of gold and silver or even brass, all of which may be applied as a spiritual element found in the Lord Jesus. This glow, the bright light being emanating from the very heart of the throne is seen by Ezekiel three times. Eze. 1:4, 1:27, 8:2 He describes this fiery One as being clothed in what can only be called cloven or divided tongues of fire. That same fire was to descend on the day of Pentecost as the waiting believers were filled with the fire of the Spirit. Acts 2:3 Thus, in keeping with the prophecy of John the Baptist, they

were baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire. Luke 3:16 The fire divided at His loins, blazed upwards and downwards. Jesus speaking of the baptism of the Spirit stated that from the loins, belly or innermost being, the Spirit would flow like rivers of living water. John 7:38-39 The same Spirit, the same source.

If our God is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29) and He is, then we should not be astonished that He would reveal Himself in such a fiery manner. When Israel saw His glory on the mount they saw it as a blazing wild fire, which were it natural fire would have certainly devoured everything on the mountain. Ex. 24:17 As shocking as it may be, heaven is a place of fire. The glory of the Lord is as a consuming fire and the prophet Isaiah states that the righteous will spend eternity dwelling with the devouring fire and the everlasting burnings. Isa. 33:14 That is not a destructive fire but the continual presence of the power of the Spirit as it will flow throughout the eternal kingdom of the Lord. When Solomon dedicated the temple the glory of the Lord descended as fire and consumed the sacrifices prepared by Him, Demonstrating that the glory of the Lord and His glory are one and the same. 2 Chr. 7:1-3

Associated with the revelation of the nature of the Lord there is always that light. A brilliant, scintillating, pulsating, glowing, active light. Because God is light and what we live by today is created light made in the proper strength to maintain life on the earth, the light of the Lord will be in its fullness, absolute power. For example, Isaiah proclaimed that the sun would shine seven times brighter. Isa. 30:26 Seven being a number of divine completion, that would amount to the absolute maximum of the brilliancy of the light of the Lord. After all, the Lord did liken Himself to a Sun. Ps. 84:11.

27

The appearance of the likeness of the rainbow tells us that there is a very special atmosphere in heaven. To produce the bow there has to be light. Also a cloud and rain. We know that the Lord is light. 1 John 1:5 Clouds typify the host's of heaven. Redeemed and angelic. These are those who are termed to be the cloud of witnesses. Heb. 12:1 They are also seen coming with Him when He returns at the end of the age. Mt. 26:64 The light of the sun shining on millions of droplets of rain create the right conditions for the evidence of the covenant which

that Lord made with man. The throne is the source of the most spectacular light show ever seen. The colors are perfect, vivid and alive. There is nothing like it that can be reproduced on earth. The rainbow surrounding the throne gives evidence of the Godhead and shows us how three can be one. Yellow, the Father. Red, the Son and the blue emblematic of the Holy Spirit. Three colors, one rainbow. Three persons, one God.

In Him, that is in Jesus the completeness of the Godhead was to be found, residing permanently. The mystery of God likeness is solved when we realize that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. 2 Cor. 5:19 Jesus said that He was in the Father and the Father was in Him. Perfect, absolute accord and harmony. The Lord Jesus did not work alone but followed the example established and manifest by the Father. All of His actions followed the actions of His Father. John 5:19 The unity of the rainbow and the elements necessary to produce such a beautiful sight are all typical of the unity of the Godhead. The stage for the final acts of the Lord is established by the appearance of a mighty angel. Rev. 10:1 The position and accomplishment of an angel is that of a messenger. Therefore any messenger sent by the Lord is an angel. Not all in the scriptures which are called angels are created angels by any means. This messenger is none other than the Lord Jesus. He is a mighty angel, a man of great strength and power. He is clothed with a cloud, what cloud other than the cloud of the glory of the Lord. He is crowned with a rainbow, giving evidence of the fullness of God being resident in Him. His face shines brightly as the sun in full strength. That glorious light of the Lord is also resident within Him, in its completeness. His feet as pillar of fire. The same bright burning flames which Ezekiel saw. For all the attempt of the scriptures to convey to us the beauty and majesty of the Lord and His glory, having to use the elements of this world cannot deliver the exceeding great glory of the Lord which will be manifest throughout eternity in the new heavens and the new earth. We will never cease to marvel at the splendor of the Lord Jesus and the display of that glory as it fills heaven and its inhabitants.

28

Having seen the tremendous manifestation of the glory of the Lord and consequently falling on his face before the Lord, Ezekiel is given further evidence of the presence of the Lord in his life. The Spirit of the

Lord entered him and he was lifted up and stood before the Lord, by the Spirit. Eze. 2:1 Ezekiel is now given the title of the Son of man. He is called or addressed as the son of man, Son of man, over ninety times in the book of Ezekiel. When Jesus began His ministry He identified Himself as the Son of man. Mt. 8:20 This title is used by Him and of Him some seventy four times in the New Testament. Ezekiel, the Son of man, natural, carnal with human imperfections. Jesus, born of a virgin, human but also spiritual. A man, but also God. The perfect Son of God, the perfect Man.

After such tremendously inspiring revelation of the glory of the Lord, Ezekiel is given an assignment to go and prophecy to the children of Israel. Glorious anointing, deep revelation such as was given to Ezekiel were in preparation for the call of the Spirit which was now being given to him. His appointment was not an easy one considering the spiritual condition of the people to whom he was being sent. Consider how the Lord saw them. To the Lord they were a rebellious nation, transgressing against the Lord. Impudent children, stiff hearted, a rebellious house, scorpions, most rebellious. Eze. 2:3-7 They were a perfect picture of the once religious individual who has forsaken the Lord.

The Lord most definitely did not speak words of encouragement to Ezekiel concerning his ministry among such a people. If they responded negatively or positively, his prophecies would be of such power and authority that Israel would know that a prophet had been among them. Eze. 2:5 His prophecies would be disregarded, challenged and greatly opposed. Now how would you like an assignment like that? Whatever the results, Ezekiel was to be faithful in declaring the words which the Lord would give him. We have noted that the Spirit of the Lord was upon him. Now the Lord is instructing him to take the scroll before him, which would be the Word of the Lord and eat it. The spirit and the Word were his equipment. The results were up to the Lord. His responsibility was to declare a message of lamentations, mourning and woe. Eze. 2:10 It was a call for the children of Israel to return unto the Lord. In spite of the negative aspect of his message, it speaks of the Lord visiting with warnings and an offer of grace and mercy before judgment. We will definitely hear a different message from the modern pulpits before the judgments of the Lord are in the earth.

The Lord commanded Ezekiel to ingest the roll or book, which was nothing more nor less than the Word of the Lord. This was not a physical meal but the eternal, living Word, the Lord Jesus. John 1:14 That Word was to become his companion and guide. We too need to eat, devour the book until it becomes a very positive part of our life. Every Christian should be a student of the Word. The pleasant words of the Word are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones. Prov. 16:24 He was to speak the Word of the Lord as it was revealed to him without fear of favor. Again there is a parallel with the experience of John on Patmos. He too was commanded to eat the book, which to his taste had that same sweetness but in the fulfillment of that which was shown him, there was bitterness. Both beheld the judgments of the Lord. Rev. 10:8-11 The prophet Jeremiah also found the Word of the Lord and when he ate it he found that it caused joy and rejoicing to break out in his heart. He also made the great discovery that the name of the LORD God of hosts was called upon His people. Jer. 15:16 Something that many in our day have not discovered because they do not eat the book.

Question. Why do so many today take the positive prophecies pertaining to Israel and not include the negative such as found in Ezekiel, Jeremiah and other prophets. These two prophets spoke harshly to Israel. Has anything changed? Are they any less disobedient to the word today than in the days of these prophets? To accept one, only that which seems positive to the rejection of that which is negative is a disservice to the people of Israel. They must hear the whole Word of the Lord in order to make the right decisions. The Lord is still calling to a nation which continuously disregards Him. 2 Cor. 3:14 As then, so now, they will not hearken for they are impudent and hardhearted. Eze. 3:7

The Lord equipped the prophet in a manner comparable to the task before him. His ability to stand before them with boldness of face and hardness of brow was a gift of the Lord. They would not be able to exceed and conquer the boldness with which he would prophesy among them. Where they hardened their hearts as an adamant stone, (Zech.7:12) the Lord hardened his forehead as an adamant stone that he might be able to resist all their display of rebellion. Eze. 3:9 The Lord also encouraged him not to be disturbed or even frightened by

their attitude against the Word of the Lord which he was commissioned to deliver to them. He was well warned and equipped for the extremely difficult task unto which the Lord had called him. Speak My Word which I give you, without fear or favor. Eze. 3:10-11.

30

The operation of the Spirit of the Lord in the life of Ezekiel was most wonderful and unusual. The first time there was a manifestation of the miraculous working of the Spirit he was merely set upon his feet. Eze. 2:2 This time he was lifted up and was about to be transported by the Spirit. Eze. 3:12, 14 While this is a most unusual method of transportation he was not the only one to have had this sort of an experience. Elijah was to have a very similar occurrence take place in his life. For he was carried by what was described as and no doubt appeared to be a whirlwind or a hurricane which carried him into heaven. 2 Kings 2:11 Such a mighty display would have the same roar and sound as that which Ezekiel heard. It is also a New Testament phenomenon, for we find that Philip having ministered the Word to the Ethiopian eunuch and having baptized him was subsequently caught away by the Spirit. Acts 8:39 The age of miracles has not yet come to its end. With the Lord all things are possible.

The Lord has scheduled two great events for the end of the age where there will be an extreme work of deliverance manifest in a deliverance of those who are His. The first will be that wonderful incidence when the Bride of Christ is delivered from the powers of darkness and the great tribulation, which is sparked by the birth of the man-child. Rev. 12:4 Item one; the male child birthed by this gorgeously arrayed woman is "caught up" immediately into heaven. This is accomplished by the same power and Spirit which we have already seen at work. The woman, the Bride will see a brief period of persecution. Rev. 12:13 Again, the ability of the Spirit of the Lord to transport in this unique manner will be demonstrated as the Bride is taken by eagle winged power into a place prepared by the Lord. Rev. 12:6, 14

The second demonstration of this majestic power will not only involve the living but those who have died in Christ as well. The Word declares to us that the Lord Jesus will come the second time accompanied with the clouds of heaven. These are special clouds comprised of the multitudes of those who are in the kingdom of heaven and are clothed

in white. Rev. 19:14 Jesus said that He would be visible at His coming and that it would be accompanied by power and great glory. Mt. 24:30 His coming will be accompanied by a cosmic conflagration which has been promised by the Lord to accompany the Lord Jesus at His return. 2 Peter 3:7 When He is revealed at the close of the tribulation He comes as a flaming fire. 2 Thes. 1:8 When He comes as a thief it is with this same fire. 2 Pet.3:10 At this time, the living and the dead will be "caught up" to ever be with the Lord. 1 Thes. 4:17.

31

In the midst of all that was taking place in his life, Ezekiel heard a tremendous sound like the rushing of a mighty wind. This was not only a sound which originated from behind him but it surrounded him and was also the sound of the movement of the living creatures. Eze. 3:12-13. It is comparable to the visitation of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2:2 A wind strong enough to deserve this kind of description would be equal to the sound of the wind during a hurricane. Where the hurricane is destructive, the activity of the Spirit creating this sound is greatly beneficial, as is all that the Lord does.

Out of the sound which he heard came a mighty voice articulating the desire and will of the Lord. The Lord will speak to His people in many ways. In this instant it is with a mighty voice. The same is true with John on Patmos, He heard a mighty voice behind him with the volume of a trumpet. Mind you, it was not a trumpet sound, but a voice sounding clearly and with a tremendous blast. It was the voice of the Lord speaking directly to the church of that day and today as well. Rev. 1:10 In the book of Revelation His voice is compared to the sound of great waters. Rev. 1:15 That could be anything from the quite murmur of a stream, to the roar of the ocean as it dashes against the shore when driven by wind and tide. Regardless of how the voice of the Lord may be heard, the most important thing is a response of obedience to the Words spoken.

The statement uttered by the voice gives content, even personality to the glory of the Lord. What is more desirable than to see or experience the glory of the Lord? The children of Israel were greatly blessed of the Lord by His visible presence among them. It appeared before them from mount Sinai (Ex. 24:16) to the dedication of Solomon's temple. (1 Kings 8:11). The day of Pentecost was a day of the revelation of the

visible glory of the Lord as that glory appeared in the form of the cloven tongues of fire, which descended upon each and every individual who had gathered to receive the promise of the Lord Jesus. The reality of one having been visited by the glory of the Lord is borne out in the anointing of the Spirit which will be manifest in their spiritual life. The last day church of His glory will be a thing of beauty to behold. He will thoroughly glorify them with His glory. Eph. 5:27 That is why the woman of Revelation twelve could not be anyone other than the Bride of His glory. She is depicted as being clothed with every light bearing body visible to mankind. Rev. 12:1 There is no greater splendor seen by the natural eyes of humans than these glorious, brilliantly shining lights given to enlighten the world, except His eternal glory.

32

That the experiences of Ezekiel were supernatural and the evidence of the working of the Spirit in his life is verified by the language used in describing what had taken place. He was lifted up and carried away, the ruach, the mighty wind, the breath of the Spirit transported him and placed him where he could be of great value to the Lord in conveying the message of the Lord to the people of Israel. Eze. 3:14 The meaning of being "lifted up" is further demonstrated when the hand of the Lord appeared and grabbed a hold of a lock of his hair. He was then lifted up between heaven and earth where he was given visions of the gross spiritual condition of the people. Eze. 8:3 To further attest to the fact of Ezekiel being carried about by the hand and Spirit of the Lord, we find that he was "carried out and set down" in the midst of the valley of dry bones. Eze. 37:1 These three instances leave no doubt concerning the method used by the Lord in taking Ezekiel from here to there. The Lord gloriously gave witness to His ability to go beyond the limits of the natural man.

The emotions, the feelings of the Lord are reflected in Ezekiel. We are made in the image and likeness of the Lord. We have the same feelings, the difference being, that His are sanctified and ours are not. In spite of His strong attitude and dislike of sin, He is still the God of love and is quick to forgive where there is repentance. Ezekiel went in the bitterness and the heat of his spirit. Eze. 3:14 Having heard from the Lord His feelings of the attitude and stubbornness of the people to whom he was being sent, he quite naturally became saturated with the

emotions of the Lord. However, they were not tempered with the divine nature of the Lord but demonstrated the human nature which is in us all.

What a blessedness, the hand of the Lord was strongly, greatly, mightily upon Ezekiel. That hand is the sign of the anointing and power of the Lord guiding, directing and bestowing the blessing of the Lord on those whom He chooses to lay His hand upon. Supernatural works are wrought when the hand of the Lord is present. We see this in the events taking place in the life of Ezekiel. The hand of the Lord came upon Elijah and he took off running at a supernatural pace, beating Ahab who was riding in a chariot, to the city of Jezreel. 1 Kings 18:46 Elisha was called upon to give direction to king Jehoshaphat. Elisha called for a musician to come and play for him. The song of the Lord had its effect on Elisha and the hand of the Lord came upon him. Thus he was able to prophesy and give the king the answer to his dilemma. 2 Kings 3:15 May the Lord lay His hand upon us all. It is Jesus who is situated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Heb. 1:3.

33

Tel-abib. Tel, a hill or elevation. Abib, an ear of corn, or grain, which according to the season would have been barley. Eze. 3:15 A very interesting and significant name. It has the shades of remembering the goodness of their former life in Israel and their form of worship unto the Lord. All of which, while in their own country, they had forsaken and corrupted by mixing idol worship with worship unto the Lord. Now, in captivity they remember what they had once had and enjoyed in their own country. Too often, the good things of the Lord are disregarded until they are lost, and then we mourn for them and wish to possess them once more.

The month Abib is the month of new beginnings. It was first month of the Levitical year, it was also the new year for them. It was the month when they celebrated the feast of Passover. It was a remembrance of their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. The month of new beginnings, freedom and release from captivity. Ex 12:1-2 It was a type of salvation through the sacrifice of a lamb. The Lord Jesus as the Lamb of God fulfilled perfectly every jot and tittle of its spiritual significance. 1 Cor. 5:7 Every time we partake of the Communion table

we celebrate the feast of Passover, the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

The timing of the feast of Passover and the subsequent feast of unleavened bread is measured perfectly by the scriptures. The Jewish year was based on a lunar measurement which caused it to occur in the months of March-April. The feast of first fruit required the presentation of first ripened grain, which was then waved before the Lord. For there to be ripened grain, whether the month was March or April required the hand of the Lord in the growth and ripening of the barley. That in itself would be a miracle. Who can determine and assure the farmer that his crop will be ripe every year at the proper time to be able to wave the first ripe barley before Him, precisely on the appointed day. That would definitely be the handiwork of the Lord. Lev. 23:6-11

Sitting by the river Chebar and joining them Ezekiel found a group of captives to whom this seems to be common place. In the way of Jewish life at that time these would have been the elders who sat as judges in the gate. See Ruth 4:11 Also, the fact that Ezekiel was with them for the entire seven days of his silence would seem to verify their position. His experiences were so powerful and most unusual that the poor man sat in utter astonishment for one whole week. For certain, he had seen some terrific displays of the might and power of the Lord.

34

Ezekiel received his orders from the Word of the Lord and was delegated the tremendous responsibility of standing between the living and the dead, as a divinely appointed watchman. The prophecies which he was to deliver were not to be what may be termed positive, self pleasing or pleasing to the hearer but were ominous warnings to the wicked who were commanded to repent of their deeds. Failure on the part of Ezekiel to strongly warn the wicked of the anger of the Lord against living a life of wickedness would not only cause them to die in their iniquity but would also bring judgment upon Ezekiel. His message to the righteous was that if they turned from their righteousness, their judgment would be the same. A tremendous responsibility laid on Ezekiel by the Lord. The statements of the Lord to Ezekiel are so serious that every preacher should evaluate his or her message which

they deliver to the people. Is it a call to repentance or is it just fluff and marsh mellows. Eze. 3:17-21

The willingness of Ezekiel to be obedient to the call of the Lord is further tested by His request for Ezekiel to go to the plain and there the Lord would communicate with him. Eze. 3:22 His move was well worth while for once again he saw the glory of the Lord. It is very evident that the privilege of being in the presence of the glory of the Lord is dependent upon obedience to the will of the Lord. That awesome presence caused him to be slain, to fall on his face before the Lord. Precious, wonderful, glorious the spiritual experience that he was to enjoy there. Anytime the Spirit of the Lord enters into a dedicated human vessel it is an out of this world experience for sure. Every child of the Lord needs to see the glory of the Lord, fall in worship

before Him, have the Spirit come into them and then be lifted upright by the Spirit of the Lord. Eze. 3:24 The church of today needs to have a vision of the glory of the Lord and enter into a relationship with Him where we become submissive to the will and purpose of the Lord.

The dealings of the Lord with Ezekiel may seem strange but he would positively know that he was in the perfect will of the Lord. His orders were to go home and shut himself in his house, and stay there. He was to refrain from speaking to the rebellious people for the Lord Himself would seal his mouth until the Lord would loose his mouth to declare the Word of the Lord. All very strange but leaving no doubt in the heart of Ezekiel that the call and Word of the Lord was with him. He was motivate by the Spirit of the Lord to declare the words of the Lord. To be successful or not, was not a part of his calling. He was to do the will of the Lord regardless of the outcome. Eze. 3:24-27.

35

In a curiously strange manner Ezekiel was called upon by the Lord to become a spectacle and a sign to the people of Israel. Of this we may be assured, he would not be ignored. His actions would become the conversation of the day. Most definitely a very effective way of getting the attention of the people. He was to demonstrate artistic ability by chiseling a replica of the city of Jerusalem on a large white brick. Eze. 4:1 Having accomplished his engraving of the city he was to prophesy, by portrayal, the judgments of the Lord against the city. In miniature

he showed the impending war and capture of the city of Jerusalem. His actions were a sign and a warning to Israel. Eze. 4:2-3 However strange or harsh the manner of His speaking, the Lord is faithful and merciful to warn mankind of any impending judgment. Life today is filled with the fulfillment of Biblical prophecies pertaining to the end of the age. Not all have by any means been fulfilled but we are in progress of seeing the signs recorded in the Word come to pass. It is time to heed them and react accordingly.

Periodically, in the scriptures there are indications or small hints of things to come. The idea of an innocent man, called of the Lord, bearing the iniquity of a nation is one of them. Eze. 4:5 How can we help but think of one who would come and bear not just the sin of a nation but the sin of the whole world. The totality of the sin of the ages was laid upon the Lord Jesus, who as the Lamb of God carried the penalty of sin for every individual ever to be born into this world. Isa. 53:6 Never having sinned, yet Jesus, became the totality of sin for us that we might possess His righteousness.

2 Cor. 5:21

Ezekiel was to lay on his left side for three hundred ninety days for Jerusalem and the tribes in Jerusalem, called Israel, which would be the number of days of their siege and on his right for forty days for Judah. Eze 4:4-6 In addressing them as Israel he would be speaking to the full complement of twelve tribes. When the message was to Judah is had to be related to the days after the division and the departure of the ten tribes who would become known as the northern tribes, Samaria or Israel. The two tribes remaining in Jerusalem were called Judah. Thus the prophecy was against Jerusalem and its inhabitants. According to Matthew Henry in his Commentary this would have been accomplished when the Chaldean army besieged Jerusalem. Jer. 52:4-6 However they had to withdraw and fight the invading Egyptians whom they defeated and then returned to Jerusalem to finish their destruction of the city of Jerusalem. Jer. 37:5-8

36

The seriousness of the impending siege is emphasized by the command of the Lord for the prophet to set, to fix his face toward Jerusalem, that there might be no question as to whom the Lord was about to punish. The stretching out of the bare arm was also to

emphasize the anger of the Lord. The bare arm illustrating that the Lord was about to work a mighty work, either for good or bad. Isa. 52:10 To make certain that the full will of the Lord be executed he was bound by the Lord, that he might not turn from side to side as he reclined before his artistry. The daily length of time that he laid before the Lord is not stated. Obviously it was not a situation which lasted twenty four hours of each day but sufficient for him to declare his message to Jerusalem. Eze. 4:7-8

His diet was special and measured, showing that during the siege there would be a scarcity of food. The number of ingredients which he baked into bread was six. This bread he would then dole out to himself from time to time during the day. The measure of the supply of water which he was allowed was the sixth part of an hin. Six is the number of man and is one number short of seven, the number of perfection. The imperfections of man are clearly visible in the number used and indicate that they will be judged as sinful men. Eze. 4:9-11

The piety of Ezekiel is noted in his refusal to use human excrement as a fuel to bake the cakes. This gives us a bit of an insight as to why the Lord chose him to be a prophet. He would not desecrate his spiritual life by using an unclean fuel for his cooking, even through it was the Lord who suggested that he do such a thing. It was a sign that the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the land would be driven out and made to dwell among the Gentiles. There they would not be able to maintain their dietary standards and would be forced to eat polluted foods. Eze. 4:12-15

The restrictions which the Lord placed upon him were bearable for he was doing it as unto the Lord. Under the circumstances he could have finished this diet looking and feeling much healthier than when he stated, for he was doing it according to the will of the Lord. However, for those under siege, the situation would be emaciating. Inside the city there would rationing of food and water to such a degree that the people would grow tired, weary and be stupefied for lack of food and water. Because of their continued iniquity and refusal to repent and seek the Lord they would be consumed with hunger. Eze. 4: 16-17.

37

The extreme wrath of the Lord to be released on Israel. Their future is

portrayed by Ezekiel by taking a sharp sword and cutting off all of the hair of his head and his face. The sword represented the enemy which would array itself against Jerusalem. The hair, the population of the city upon whom the threefold judgment was to come. A third would be consumed by hunger and thirst. The sword will be the cause of the demise of a third in the city as it falls and a third will be slain as they flee from the city. Eze. 5:1-4, 12

All these problems they had brought on themselves by rejecting the Lord. They displayed total disregard for His Word and obviously had chosen to ignore or had completely forgotten the curses which would come upon them if they disobeyed the Lord. Deut. 28:15-45 The indictment, and judgment of the Word would automatically come upon them because of their gross disobedience to the Lord. They desecrated the Holiness of the Lord by their deliberate acts of disobedience. Their actions were diametrically opposite of that which the Lord had required of them. They had polluted the sanctuary of the Lord. For the Lord to send such a punishment upon them indicated that their wickedness had reached its ultimate. During the siege they committed the most heinous acts of cannibalism. Therefore the fury of the Lord would come upon them. Eze. 5:5-17

There is a point of no return. As in that day so it will be in the end of the age. If they were wicked, what is coming will make them look like a Sunday School picnic. The Apostle Paul paints for us a word picture of the last days which has not yet reached its full capacity. Most of the whole first chapter of Romans is given over to the conditions of the world preceding the coming of the Lord Jesus. What we are experiencing today in the changing character of the world is but the beginning of a wave of unrighteousness which will climax in the revelation of the antichrist. Then things will really break loose like the destruction of a dam results in a flood, so the world will be totally overwhelmed by the spirit and power of the man of sin, the son of perdition.

Total, absolute wickedness will prevail. There will be no restrictions on anything which today would be termed uncouth or improper. The mystery of iniquity is continuing to work and will be more and more the accepted thing as time goes by. What is unlawful today will tomorrow be made lawful and completely acceptable by society for all will be involved. Wickedness will reach its climax just prior to the

return of the Lord Jesus. As in the days of Ezekiel, utter destruction came upon them, so it will be in the end of the age. 2 Thes. 2:7-12.

38

The mercy of the Lord is evident in the truthfulness of the message of the prophet and the execution of the events declared. In his prophetic utterances Ezekiel is portraying the future of Israel and the horrific actions which shall be taken against them. The plus side of these coming judgments is that the Lord afforded them a time in which they could repent and correct the past, present and future of Israel. The same emotions which we find in ourselves are also evident in the nature of the Lord. While ours are tainted by our sinful nature, His are righteous and perfect. In the spiritual life style of Israel we see the utter rejection of the ways of the Lord which almost appear to be deliberate. Rejection is not always easy to handle. Its consequences can result in severe retaliation. Knowing this, perhaps we can, in some measure feel the great heart and feelings of the Lord in this. Paul mentions the patience of the Lord in calling for a change of heart in Israel by the Lord having stretched out His hand all day long to them. Rom. 10:21 Jesus spoke of His patience in dealing with the church at Thyatira by affording them an opportunity and space of time for repentance. Rev. 2:21 The judgments of the Lord do not come because of Him, "losing His temper," and then reacting in complete anger. Always, He shows mercy before judgment.

The prophecy of Ezekiel was accomplished by Babylon in B.C. 588.

The reason for the Lord sending His prophet and the record is to be found in 2 Kings 25:1-11. It is needful that we take note of the longsuffering of the Lord in continuously sending messengers to Israel, warning them of the impending results of their ungodly attitude and actions. 2 Chron. 36:15-20 The Lord is faithful in keeping His promises for He had given them assurance that there would be a remnant of Israel who would live through the horrors of their own causing and become a seed for the future of the nation. Jer. 39:8-10

Some will people will react only to extreme measures. Not all, but many today come to the Lord after having gone through a period of hurt and anguish in their life. Such were these who are called the remnant and were privileged to live by having escaped the destruction of their nation, though they were to be held in captivity. Eze. 6:8 Had

they but listened to the voice of the Lord all that had happened to them could easily have been avoided by their repentance and the correction of their worship of idols and the gods of the people among whom they were dwelling in the days of Ezekiel. The solution would have avoided all that came upon them but stubbornness of heart kept them from the blessings of the Lord. Hmmmm, seems that here is a lesson to be learned here.

39

As the Lord experienced various emotions because of their resistance to His wooing, so, He must feel the same emotions when dealing with us. He was broken hearted because of their wayward acts. Eze. 6:9 The created made their creator to be sorrowful of heart by their wayward life. It is not easy to even think of the Lord having such a reaction to our doings, but there it is. Furthermore, the Lord said through Ezekiel that they "fretted" Him. Eze. 16:43 The Hebrew word fretted is a very strong and meaningful word declaring that the individual is caused to shake and quiver with any violent emotion, especially anger. Isaiah spoke of Israel being as people who wearied the Lord. That is they disgusted or wore Him out. He became exceedingly tired of their attitude and complaining. Isa. 7:13 Their rebellious nature became a source of vexation to the Holy Spirit. Isa. 63:10 Amos proclaimed that they had become a great burden to the Lord. Like that which is run over by the wheels of a fully loaded cart and pressed down into the earth. Amos 2:13.

There was to be a threefold sentence of death upon them. The pestilence, the sword and the famine. Eze. 6:11 His gestures of the smiting of the hand and the stamping of the feet express the seriousness of that which was about to come upon them. Both are used in the scriptures as signs of indignation and impending punishment from the Lord. It is hard to imagine how far apart (the greatness of the gulf) the people of Israel had become in their spiritual life before the Lord. The total exasperation of the Lord is expressed by the statement, "I will accomplish my fury upon them." Eze 6:12 A fearful and frightening announcement. Their places and subjects of worship would be the very place where their dead bodies would be found. Eze. 6:13 False worship has the sentence of death upon it. In spite of dire circumstances there are always those who have not followed the way of their neighbors and maintained true worship.

These, no doubt, are the ones that escaped death and were taken into captivity.

As with many of the circumstances recorded in the old testament, that which was spoken of by Ezekiel will repeat itself and reach it climax, in the end of the age. As horrendous as the situation was with Israel and its unhappy results, it was but the beginning of the stream. We are about to reach the flood tide of the prophecy. We find the threefold judgment in the sixth chapter of the book of Revelation. Wars, famines and pandemics. An ear, tuned and responding to the voice of the Lord will find deliverance in the Lord Jesus. He is a sure refuge. Ps. 57:1.

40

The manner in which the Lord accomplishes His purposes are similar throughout the writing of the scriptures. It is very evident that the Lord will punish the world in the end of the age in the same manner as that prophesied against Israel by Ezekiel. War, the sword, death by killing are declared as being last day sign. The opening of the second seal has leashed a flood tide of war and rumors of wars , ethnic purging, mass murders, and suicide bombings until the earth has become a virtual killing field. The color of the second horse and its subsequent power, loosed is red, the color of blood. Rev. 6:4 He has the authority to remove, eradicate peace from the earth, causing bloody revolutions, uprisings and disruptions of all kinds against legitimate governments. With the break down of a peaceful society they randomly kill in gang warfare, drive by shootings, road rage and deliberately, to cover a crime or kidnapping. The sword prevails and represents death by means other than that which is natural. Peace is found in Jesus and prevails in the hearts of those who know Him, regardless of the circumstances of the world. John 14:27

Black, the color of death by famine. Lamentations 5:10 confirms this by associating black to death by famine. Currently there is an advertisement being shown on TV which declares that one in eight in America go to bed at night, hungry. That is not caused by a lack of food but by the ability to obtain it. The scales in the hand of the rider indicates the weighing of food, doling out in measured portions. It may seem insignificant to some that in the continuous increase of the price of food, the packages are increasingly smaller, while the price is raised. Under the opening of this seal, wheat sufficient for the food of

one individual could be purchased for a days wage. Barley, barely enough for a small family, for the same price. It is better to be slain by the sword than to die of hunger. Lam. 4:9 However, in the midst of this bleak situation, there is a group whose needs are met, they are the oil and the wine. The anointed (the oil), the wine (the Spirit filled). A supernatural means of meeting the needs of His people is not uncommon with the Lord. Elijah was carried food twice a day by the ravens. 1 Kings 17:6 Elijah, an unnamed widow and her son, scraped the bottom of the barrel and poured oil from the diminishing contents of a cruse of oil and existed many days on a supply that could not be stopped. 1 Kings 17:12-14 The Lord sent Manna and quail to the children of Israel in the wilderness. Jesus said that He had meat to eat of which His disciples were not aware. John 4:32 God shall supply all your needs. Phil. 4:19

(continued in 41-60)