

The Book of Ezekiel (41-60)

Author: Rev. C. J. McKnight

41

It is imperative to the well being of any and all that we balance the impending judgments with the promises of the Lord to His own. When His requirement are met, there is promised deliverance. "None of these diseases" will effect those who are His. But, there are requirements which must be met. Namely, diligently respond to the Word of the Lord. Live according to His Word. Be willing to hear and obey His Word. Ex. 15:26 In the case of the Israelites who were in captivity in Egypt He revealed Himself as Jehovah-raphah, the healing, curing Lord. In one night, by partaking of the Passover Lamb, there was a wave of healing virtue which came upon the captives in Egypt until when they left, there was not to be found one sick or emaciated person among them. The Lord had revealed Himself by His name to them and they were all well and strong. Ps. 105:37

Those who believe and obey the Word of the Lord have a great assurance and potential for a joyous and happy life in the Lord. Not only is He the Lord who heals but He is the Lord who keeps diseases and illnesses away from those who serve Him. Ex. 23:25 His work is complete and absolute. Has He forgiven ALL our sins? Then with the same breath He said He would heal from ALL our diseases. Ps. 103:3 The Apostolic method still works. Call for prayer by the elders of the church. Be anointed with oil in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, believe and there is deliverance, not only from sicknesses but and if necessary, from sin. Confess your faults pray fervently and enjoy the results. James 5:14-16

The pestilence, the plague, sickness and disease are predicted under the opening of the fourth seal. Rev. 6:7 That the seal and its subsequent display of various kinds of illnesses, old and new, is in effect is apparent. We live in a sick society, sick in more ways than one. We have seen new diseases crop up and when a cure is found, there is another which takes its place as the latest pandemic. This pale horse, is rightly named Death and Hell, for it not only embraces death by disease, but every and any event causing death other than old age.

Rev. 6:8 Most unfortunately, sudden, unexpected death can leave a person without an opportunity to repent before the Lord and assure themselves of eternal life as it is found in Him. Whatever disease breaks out anywhere in the world is soon transported around the world, due to our modern day ability to fly from continent to continent in just a few brief hours. There is a refuge, a shelter where the mercy and the grace of the Lord surrounds one and keeps believers from danger and harm. Ps. 91:1-10.

42

Ezekiel commanded to prophesy to the elements of nature. Because of the hardness of the hearts of the people the prophecy is not directed precisely to them but they got the message. There would be no hiding place once the Lord started to judge them. Their false worship of idols was to be broken and the area occupied by their idols would be desecrated by the carcasses of those slain. Complete destruction of the objects of their wayward worship would be accomplished. Eze. 5:1-7 Dare we apply such misguided worship to today's world? Even in the church world there are inanimate objects, religious symbols, by which security and protection is sought by their display. Every segment of life has those who are termed to be stars, idols, trend setters whom the population of the earth seek to emulate in action and attire. From sports to the pulpit their popularity elevates them to the status of a champion. Oh yes, we have modern day living idols who are sought after by screaming mobs of people where ever they go. They are also invited into our homes where we sit before them and admire every action and word. Jesus said; "You shall worship the LORD your God and Him only you shall serve. Mt. 4:10

A remnant to be left, after the visitation of the enemy army, who were to be scattered among the nations and taken into captivity. These are like the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. 1 Kings 19:18 In spite of such religious corruption, there are always those who are the minority and have not followed the way of worship conducted by the people of their generation. Much like Lot who was daily vexed with the filthy communication to which he was subjected. 2 Peter 2:7 While in captivity, they would remember the Lord. Eze. 5:8-9 It is a fact of life and scriptural that trouble causes many to turn back to the Lord. Ps. 78:34

On the surface the actions of the Lord may seem to be harsh. But, consider His feelings as the prophet expressed them. His love for them had been greatly violated. Thus, He was broken hearted. This was not a light frivolous feeling or emotion. He is the Lord from whom all emotions flow. He had constantly demonstrated His love and passion for them. Is there a harder thing to face in life than utter rejection? In the eyes and emotions of the Lord, He considered Himself married to them. Jer. 3:14 Therefore, when they turned their backs on Him and sought after the idols of the heathen, He considered it to be adultery. Their eyes were filled, they had eyes only for their idols. Their abominations had become too much for the Lord.

43

A key statement is made in the next prophecy of Ezekiel. The Lord said that He would recompense them according to their abominations. Eze. 7:9 There would be no pity nor help extended to them. A people of this nature have gone beyond the line of no return and are destined to receive their just due. It is a condition which will be repeated in the closing days of time known as the great tribulation. Iniquity and the worship of a false god will reach its climax and a just reward will be given to all who do so. Israel had been well forewarned of the consequences of going astray and worshiping just exactly as they were doing. The command of the Lord was that they were to have no other gods before Him. Ex. 20:3 Because they disobeyed and totally ignored the Lord they brought upon themselves this destruction.

When reading the verses of chapter seven how can we help but compare them to that three and one half years when the antichrist will reign on the earth. It is a message which speaks of the end and the manifestation of the wrath of the Lord against a people, a world which is in a state of absolute ungodliness and far beyond the capability of repentance. The emphasis is placed on a day which is about to dawn. The morning is gone forth. Eze. 7:10 The Word shows us that twice, Satan leaves heaven. The first time he fell. Luke 10:18 The second and final time he is cast out, along with those of the angelic realm who follow him. Rev. 12:9 He will be cast down to this earth and will confront the woman of Revelation twelve, who is the Bride of Christ. Rev. 12:13 This is the event which triggers the great tribulation period. Isaiah fourteen also talks of this by asking two questions how are you

fallen. Isa. 12:14a Then, how are you cut or cast down to the earth.
Isa. 14:12b

This brings us to one of those strange things in the Word of the Lord, where what would seem apparent, is not the case. Lucifer, Satan is referred to as the son of the morning. Isa. 14:12 In the NIV it is translated to read, "O morning star, son of the dawn." Now, the Lord Jesus is the bright and morning star. Rev. 22:16 So close, yet a chasm of difference between the two. Satan is a deceiver, a counterfeit, he presents himself as an angel of light with such convincing force that even those who should know better are deceived by him. 2 Cor. 11:14 Without a knowledge of the Word and the gift of discernment people are deceived into thinking that he is indeed the Christ. Especially during the tribulation. Ezekiel's statements are, the morning is gone forth. The time is come. The day of trouble is near. Definitely a prophetic utterance depicting the last days. Eze. 7:7

44

The rod has blossomed. For the Israel of that day, the people to whom this prophecy was directed, the time of the rod of His anger had come. Eze. 7:10 To them the rod was about to become the evidence of His wrath against their backslidings. Lam. 3:1 Spiritual ignorance or lethargy was to be no excuse. Their unbelief and their worship of false gods had rendered them to be void of an understanding of the ways of the Lord. Pr. 10:13

The blossoming of the rod would have been a statement which should cause them to think of their own history and the overnight action of the Lord upon the rod of Aaron. When his rod, along with eleven other rods was kept over night in the Ark of the Covenant, it budded, blossomed and bore fruit in one night. Thus, showing that the house of Levi and Aaron in particular had been chosen of the Lord for the office of the priesthood. Num. 17:6-8 Of the three articles placed in the Ark of the Covenant, (which were a type of the Godhead), it is the rod which represents the Holy Spirit, He is the fruitful one. Not only will we see revival in the last days but there will also be a counter move of the powers of darkness. Spiritual deception will be rampant. 2 Tim. 3:13 As the rod of the Lord, the moving of the Holy Spirit, reaches its fruition, so, the rod of wickedness will come to its climax. The

counterfeit will appear to be the real thing and will display great signs and lying wonders. 2 Thess. 2:9-10

The key to discovering and exposing that which is false is the complete lack of humility manifest by those involved. The man of pride will lead with a spirit of pride, gripping the hearts of those who become his followers. Nebuchadnezzar is a prime example of the pride of the heart of man. The Lord chose to humble him and in doing so took his kingdom from him. Then sent him as an animal into a desert place where he lived as an animal. Dan. 5:20-21 A condition which prevailed until he knew and was willing to admit that he was not a god but mere man.

The seven fold punishment for sin is reserved for the end of the age as men trust more and more in their so called, natural abilities. As they refuse the Word of the Lord their hearts will be hardened and pride will control their hearts and lives. Lev. 26:18-19 The emphasis of the day is to develop personal pride. It is a message that resounds from the teachers desk to the pulpit, for it is the way of the world and is not the message of the heart of the Lord. 1 John 2:16 The way of pride leads to death and eternal separation from the Lord, while the true ways of the Lord lead to life everlasting.

45

Shadows of the end times are to be found in Ezekiel, especially in the remainder of this chapter. These may present quite a different picture of that time than what is generally taught. It is an imperative that we hear what the Word is saying to us. An age of great contrasts will prevail. Peace, which is sought after so desperately by the leaders of peaceful nations has been taken from the earth. As we have seen, the rider of the red horse eliminated, (snatched away), peace from the earth. Rev. 6:4 Because of the constant increase of violence, wickedness, and unrighteousness there can be no peace. There is no peace in the heart and actions of the wicked. Isa. 48:22 In many areas of modern day life, violence has become a rod and is in command, thus there are those who rule in wickedness, or because of it. Eze. 7:11.

An item which seems to be totally overlooked by many in their teaching of the second coming of Christ is the total annihilation of the

wicked. Ezekiel made the statement that none shall remain. The NIV translation is very illuminating and comprehensive. "None of the people will be left, none of that crowd — no wealth, nothing of value." Eze. 7:11 Please consider, prayerfully and carefully the events accompanying Him when He comes as a thief. Anyone who reads their Bible would know that Jesus will come suddenly, as a thief sneaking into a house during the night time when all are asleep. Paul gave us these facts pertaining to His second coming. That day WILL come and it is called the day of the Lord. 1 Thess. 5:2 But what happens on that day? He said it was to be a day of sudden destruction and they, the wicked, will not escape the death and carnage of that day. 1 Thess. 5:3 After the return of the Lord Jesus there will not be one individual alive on the face of the earth. It is completely impossible to live through such a catastrophe.

Peter enlarged on the life destroying events of that day when He will come as a thief and the dead in Christ rise first, then those in Christ who are yet living on the earth will be caught up to be with Him. (1 Thess. 4:16-17) The following are the cataclysmic occurrences which accompany His second coming and take place when He comes as a thief. Coming as a thief is not meant to mean secretly but rather unexpectedly, even as Jesus taught by saying that His coming would be at a time when men would be surprised by His appearance, for to them He will come without warning. Mat. 24:44 His coming as a thief is a surprise and unexpectedly only to the unsaved. Jesus has not delayed His coming. The plans of the Lord are on schedule and will be finished when all prophecy pertaining to that day has been accomplished.

46

That which the Apostles called the day of the Lord and the second coming of Christ are one and the same day. This is seen persistently in the scriptures pertaining to His coming, or rapture. Take for instance the teaching given by Paul where he related the coming of Christ to be as flaming fire (2 Thess. 1:8) with the same moment of time when He will be glorified in His saints. (2 Thess. 1:10). He is glorified in His saints when the dead in Christ rise first and the living are changed at the time of the rapture. Thus we note, that His coming is the ultimate blessing to the believers, while at one and the same time it will be destruction for the ungodly. It is possible to see two categories of

people here. Those who have no knowledge of God and obviously have no desire to even seek to know Him and those who have a knowledge of Him but refuse to obey His Word. Obedience to the Word of the Lord is an absolute necessity as far as the Lord is concerned. 2 Thess. 1:8

When He comes as a thief, in flaming fire, it will be an event releasing a world wide storm of dark clouds, thunder and lightening such as never has been before. That burning flame will ignite the oxygen in our atmosphere causing one colossal explosion. That is the great noise of which Peter wrote. So hot and powerful is the instant detonation of the atmosphere that the very elements of which this earth has been created will melt with the excessively great heat generated by the blast. None, absolutely nothing of the work, the construction of men, the cities, the buildings, the super highways will remain after this cataclysmic event. What is left to take over after this great catastrophe strikes the earth? 2 Peter 3:10, 12

When He comes as a thief, those who are in Christ are still seen carefully guarding their faith in the Lord Jesus. They are on alert, waiting and watching for His glorious appearing. They maintain their garments of righteousness. Rev. 16:15 His coming as a thief is called the battle of Armageddon. This conflict is not a battle between the nations of the world but is a great conflict between the righteous forces of heaven and the epitome of unrighteousness and ungodliness revealed during the great tribulation. Rev. 16:16 It is no marvel that John, when receiving the Revelation, described this great calamity as being a time when the heavens are rolled up and cast off as a scroll. Likewise and of extreme importance it was revealed to him that every mountain would be leveled and all the islands would be removed from their present position. Rev. 6:14.

47

Peter also declared that all these things would be dissolved, broken up, and destroyed or even melted. He used the word twice that we might know of a certainty that there will be drastic changes when the Lord Jesus comes in all of His glory. 2 Peter 3:11-12 How much like the church at Sardis is the modern day church? Jesus, in His letter to them stated that while they had a reputation as a live, active, growing church in all actuality, you are dead. Your works are not perfect, awake be alert, maintain the spirituality which remains but is almost dead.

Hear the word, repent or I will come to you as a thief in the night, unawares, stealthily catching them totally unawares.

Rev. 3:2-3 The casual, ho hum attitude of many today toward the coming of the Lord Jesus fits perfectly into the form of the church at Sardis. His coming is mentioned frequently but there is little if any preparation toward that glorious event.

Jeremiah adds his prophetic voice to the happenings of that time. He spoke of the sounding trumpet and the sounds of warfare. Both of which relate to the trumpet sound at the coming of Christ and the subsequent battle of Armageddon. He was greatly pained by what he saw in the future and described it as destruction upon destruction. There is a sound of finality in his words. Jer. 4:19-21 He then described the spiritual condition of the people as being foolish and silly. A nation, or should we say a church, without understanding, lacking a true knowledge of the word. Wise to do evil but when it comes to obedience to the Word they have little comprehension. Jer. 4:22 The attitude that Paul saw in his day among the Jews is now the same with the church. Rom. 11:8

Jeremiah had a vision concerning the very thing of which we have seen in the Word. The world returning to the utter chaos of the beginning. Gen. 1:2 Without form and void. Lying in utter waste and completely empty. Jer. 4:23 Such total annihilation at the conclusion of the great tribulation period gives us absolute and glaring evidence that there is no possibility of sinners being found in the Millennium, the thousand years of the reign of Christ on the earth. Nor will there even be a similarity to the topography of this present earth, of any kind. His vision was rather comprehensive for he saw that there was no light (no light, no life), no man, birds had all fled, mountains shook, cities destroyed and nothing but desolation. Even so, the Lord did not make a complete end to the earth, for after His coming there is still that all important thousand years to complete the cycle of the week, the Sabbath day. Jer. 4:23-27

48

There is a set moment of time which the Lord has established for every project which He has planned to reach its completion. In reaching out in love and compassion toward a generation which has basically ignored Him there comes a time when His patience is

exhausted. Ezekiel made the statement that; the time is come. Eze. 7:12 There is that cutoff moment which has been predetermined by the Lord for everything in this life. It has been said, that history repeats itself. This is frequently evidenced in the scriptures where we see events of the past repeated, sometimes, time after time. Because of the troublesome situations of that day, people who were in business, or bought and sold, simple walked off from their deals and took their losses. Eze. 7:13 Does that sound familiar?

In a time when the church is wealth oriented it is not easy to seek a balance and to search to see what the Word really teaches. Ezekiel would not be a popular minister in our day. He saw the fallacy of riches and how they would utterly fail under circumstances such as the Lord was going to bring upon the people. Jerusalem of that day was about to reach a condition where silver and gold would be thrown out into the streets and no one even bother to pick it up, for it was absolutely powerless to deliver or free them from that which was inevitable. Eze. 7:17-19 This too has its counterpart in the time of the coming of Christ. At the time when men will run into the dens and caves of the earth to attempt to hide themselves from the coming of the Lord they will despise their silver and gold. Isa. 2:19-21 Jesus verified that this is a reaction which will be seen at the time of His coming. Luke 23:29 Rev. 6:15

Then there is a very interesting observation concerning their silver and gold, "it is the stumbling block of their iniquity." Eze. 7:19 With it they had made for themselves idols of worship. These idols occupied their hearts when they should have given that place unto the Lord. When these would come to the prophet to have him inquire of the Lord on their behalf, the Lord gave the prophet a message of repentance and the abandonment of their idols. Otherwise the Lord would resist them. Eze. 14:4-8 The wealthiest among them could not find a means of deliverance through their silver and their gold, so it will be in that day of the coming of Christ. Zeph. 1:18 Tearing down the old barns and building of new will not bring eternal joy nor salvation to the human heart. The doctrine of eat, drink and be merry is a stumbling block to many and in many ways. Luke 12:18-20

which is seldom if ever mentioned. Some of them may be called common place, such as earthquakes, famines and pestilences for these are not unusual occurrences on the earth. However, Jesus added some unusual and certainly fearful events which will precede His coming. He called them fearful sights and great signs from heaven. Luke 21:12 Then, more specifically, He said that there would be signs in the sun, and in the moon and in the stars. Luke 21:25 Joel was given the same message in his prophecy pertaining to the events which lead up to the coming of the Lord Jesus. He said that the sun would be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and terrible day of the Lord would come. Joel 2:30-31

At least a portion of what is intended in these prophetic utterances is revealed to John on Patmos. The impact of the sounding of the trumpet of the fourth angel will be weird and unusual happenings in the light giving process. One third of the sun, moon and stars cease to shine. A third of their surface will become dark. A circumstance which will most definitely create great fear on earth. Accompanying such troublesome signs one third of the day will become dark and a third of the night. If these are tied together where night follows day, that would be six hours of darkness. When the Lord turns out the lights, He does a thorough job. Consider what happened in Egypt. He caused a thick or a total blackout to come upon the Egyptians of such a complete degree that not one Egyptian moved for three days. Ex. 10:22-23 It was so black that they could not even see one another though in the same room or seated next to each other. Then, under the impact of the fifth vial and prior to the second coming, there will be a period of total darkness. The fact that they will gnaw their tongues for pain indicates the effect of a lack of light. Rev. 16:10

A key statement of the Lord recorded by Ezekiel is that the Lord said that He would "turn His face from them." Thus removing all Divine protection and creating an opportunity for all manner of unrighteousness to rule and reign. It is declared that the land would be full of bloody crimes and the city is full of violence. Sounds exactly like a modern city, and it is, violence and crime will continue to increase until the Lord Jesus returns. The people are seen seeking a prophet or someone to give them a supernatural answer to their dilemma, but there is no answer for them. Their spiritual leaders are without the presence of the Lord. Eze. 7:20-27.

There are other statements made by the Lord Jesus which pertain to the end of the age which are grossly overlooked. The true church which will emerge from among the churches of this age will be one of exceeding great power and glory. An assemblage of people who like the Apostle Paul know the meaning of his words when he said that he was pressed out of measure. 2 Cor. 1:8 Adverse situations in life have a way of breaking one, or creating a person of superior strength and spirituality. Jesus in Gethsemane, was pressed beyond measure. There, under the extreme pressure of bearing the sins of the world, He sweat great drops of blood. Luke 22:44 Most definitely, the Lord Jesus had a perfect prayer life, but here, under extremely adverse conditions, it is said; "He prayer more earnestly." While it is not so in His case, in ours, if we will not pray, we will be driven to prayer or lose out with the Lord.

It would be a joy to write a more joyful message, and we will, but there is another side to the message of the gospel and we had better know it. Just listen to the words of the Lord Jesus as He spoke them in Matthew twenty four. In relationship to the time which He titled, the beginning of sorrows, (Mt. 24:8) He said that there would be persecution in all the nations of the world. This is already in evidence in many of the countries of this world. If you think that this does not include the United States of America, think again. He said ALL NATIONS. Mt. 24:9 The major signs leading up to such a situation in America are already in process. The persistent push to remove any sign, or words which relate to Christianity is but a small sign along the road warning of things to come. The breakdown of the family will lead to the fulfillment of the words of the Lord Jesus as recorded in Mt. 10:21 This will effect, both the natural family and the spiritual family.

Jesus envisioned a people in the end of the age who were capable of enduring the fearsome onslaught of the enemy against the true church which will become His bride. He spoke the word endure, not as foreseeing a people who barely make it through the testing's and the trials, but a group who are more than conquerors through the Word of the Lord and the power an help of the Holy Spirit. They are a triumphant nation, gathered out of all nations, and made to be the people of the Most High. Mt. 10:22 They are a people who have been prepared, trained to endure hardness as a good soldier of the Lord

Jesus. 2 Tim. 2:3 While made ready by their leaders to face every situation, they are loving, kind tenderhearted and concerned about the spiritual welfare of all mankind.

51

Once again Ezekiel found himself in the glorious presence of the Lord of glory. The date given as the sixth year, the sixth month and the fifth day is intriguing. Eze. 8:1 It is just one day short of the number of the fullness of wickedness which will be revealed in the end of the age. The wickedness that the glorious presence of the Lord is about to reveal to Ezekiel is a foreshadowing of the coming of the son of perdition and the worship and adoration which will be given him. 2 Thess. 2:3 When the glorious presence of the Lord is present, sin becomes exceedingly sinful and is blatantly apparent.

The hand of the Lord came upon him. What a blessed experience for His hand speaks of His presence. The people of the new name, i.e. the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, will be crowned with the glory of the Lord and be manifest as the royal diadem, the crowning glory of the work of the Lord. Isa. 62:3 The New Testament Zion/Jerusalem is the Bride of Christ. The ultimate revelation of His righteousness. The woman to be clothed with the fullness of His glory, the sun. Rev. 12:1 Mind you, the name of the people of the Lord is changed. They bear that new name, His name, for His name shall be in their foreheads. Rev. 22:4 His name is called upon both Jew and Gentile making them into one new group, the people of God. Acts 15:17

Ezekiel was privileged to be granted a theophany. A pre-incarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus. He had been obedient to the strange commandments of the Lord and now he was to be rewarded for his obedience. Ezekiel found himself in the presence of the man, Christ Jesus. 1 Tim. 2:5 The true man, the eternal man, the only possible mediator between human and the living God. The Lord Jesus is the Word made flesh. John 1:14 It is no wonder that when He chose to reveal Himself to Ezekiel He is seen as a blazing fire or the vessel of the glory of the Lord. The Word of the Lord is likened unto a fire by none other than the Lord. Jer. 23:29 And He is an all consuming, flaming fire. Heb. 12:21 As awe inspiring and as glorious as was the manner in which the Lord chose to manifest Himself in His glory, in the Old Testament times, the believer of today is far more privileged. The relationship which is available to all under the promises of the Lord

Jesus is much more glorious. Now, it is Christ in you the hope of glory. Col. 1:27 He baptizes with the Holy Spirit and with that glorious fire of the living God. Mt. 3:11 No longer is the glory of the Lord a sporadic visitor. Now He dwells within, in the person of the Holy Spirit. He does not go and return but He abides. Jn 14:17.

52

Ezekiel also was impressed by the brightness, or the glorious light emitting from the person who appeared to him. Eze 8:2 Again, he is seeing the very nature of the Lord, for the Lord is light, both literally and spiritually. 1 John 1:5 He is the source, the beginning, the author, the creator of light. He has placed a portion and an evidence of who and what He is, in all of His creation. Jesus is the brightness of the glory of the Lord. He is the manifest glory, the very effulgence of that everlasting glory which is always apparent in the presence of the Lord. Heb. 1:3 Isaiah prophesied of a day when the visitation of the glory and the abiding presence of the Lord would be seen upon the church, as the dawning of a new and brilliant day. A day of exceeding great darkness for the ungodly but a day of great and wondrous light for the Bride, for the glory of the Lord will be made manifest through her. Isa. 60:1-2 She is to be that glorious church of His holiness and to be without spot of wrinkle. Eph. 5:27 This will be the final harvest occurring just before the great tribulation period. Isa. 60:3-5 The harvest of the earth in the end of the age by the Lord may be found in Revelation 14:14-16.

The exceeding great brilliancy of the glory of the Lord is also to be seen at the time of His second coming. It is very interesting and enlightening to note the sequence of last day events as Paul presented them to the church at Thessalonica. He placed first things first by stating that the person whose name is Wicked, that is, the antichrist will first be revealed and of course finish his evil works here on this earth. 2 Thess. 2:8a. He is destined to be consumed by the second coming of the Lord Jesus. That destruction will be wrought by the Lord Jesus using the Spirit of His mouth, or the sword of the Spirit, (which is the Word of the Lord Eph. 6:17). 2 Thess. 2:8b.

The brightness (epiphaneia – manifestation, or appearance) of His coming (parousia – advent or return) validates the time of the return of Christ to be the at the close of the tribulation. 2 Thess. 2:8c The

secret coming, the revelation, the appearing or His coming at the parousia with the subsequent catching up are all one and the same event. In his first letter to the church at Thessalonica Paul assured them that they were not walking in darkness and that day would not come upon them as a thief in the night for they are children of light and not of the night or darkness. 1 Thess. 5:4-5 It is an absolute impossibility for Jesus to come before the tribulation. This is verified by Peter when he said; that the heavens would pass away and the earth melt with the fervent heat generated by His coming in the flaming brilliancy of the glory of the Lord. 2 Pet. 3:10.

53

The prophet was called upon to receive visions instigated by the Lord. He first saw a hand, the hand of the Lord. The hand with its five digits is a type of the redemption found in the Lord Jesus. Five is the number of atonement. In a past study we noted that the hand is representative of the fullness of the presence of the Lord. With such a heavy anointing present anything could happen, and it did. Certainly, the Lord has a sense of humor. To garb Ezekiel by a lock of hair would demand his immediate attention. By the Spirit, by means of visions he was transported to Jerusalem where he was to see what may have been unseen by the eyes of man but definitely seen by the Lord. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through out the whole earth, beholding the deeds of man. Heb. 4:13.

In the spirit, he was taken to the inner gate that faced the north, placing him within the city. The corruption which he was about to view was well established and had a strong grip on the people of Jerusalem. The north is used as a type of those religious activities which corrupt the true worship of the Lord. To the people of that time it symbolized bad fortune and was considered to be a dark place. They were well aware of prophetic words such as spoken by Jeremiah, that trouble would come from the north.

Jer. 1:14 It represented trouble, difficulties, darkness, gloom and so on.

He was carried there that he might behold the direct and undisputable disobedience of the spiritual leaders in the temple. Judah had become the worshiper of idols. On prominent display was the image of jealousy which provoked the Lord to jealousy. In Israel and Judah He had

expected to find a people totally dedicated to Him. Now they were corrupting His holy house and themselves as well, by their imagery. Here, once again, we are given an insight into a human trait, which we all know too well, only to find that the Lord also has these feelings. However there is a vast difference between the reason for human jealousy and that which is Divine. He feels jealousy, when those whom He loves go after other gods. Ps. 78:58 We find jealousy manifesting itself in us over a great variety of reasons, most of which are completely unreasonable. Eze. 8:3.

Here too, as so often in the scriptures, we see a type of an end time event which is well documented in the book of Revelation. The great image, of the antichrist, built by the religious leaders of the world, under the instigation of the false prophet. Rev. 13:14.

54

Emotions are powerful forces which we face every day. They mold and shape our lives, some times for the good, other times for the worse. Most definitely, one of the strongest forces which we face in life is that of jealousy. Knowing how it plays out in human life, it is an amazing thing to find it so strongly evidenced in the Lord. Without equivocation, He plainly stated His feelings in the matter when He declared that He is a "jealous God." Ex. 20:5 To further express His exceedingly strong feelings in the matter the Lord said that His name is Jealous. Ex. 34:14 In Him, it is a righteous jealousy motivated by the magnitude of His great love. For, the greatest of all love is revealed in the Lord Jesus. John 15:13

The worship of idols or images, whether as a picture, a carving, or a person is an abomination before the Lord. Modern day humanity has a multitude of items which are openly declared to be idols. While it may seem insignificant, things of this nature are but foreshadows of that which is to come. The antichrist will be the idol of all idols, the greatest, the most popular of them all. The following is a quote from Ben Stein made on CBS. "Where did the idea come from that we should worship celebrities and we aren't allowed to worship God as we understand Him? I guess that's a sign that I'm getting old, too. But there are a lot of us who are wondering where these celebrities came from and where the America we knew went to." Today people, dress like, act like, speak like and proclaim their love and awe of idols from

every avenue of life. Lives are patterned much to their detriment, after these whom they love and adore.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about the image of the antichrist is the ability of the false prophet to give life (pneuma, breath or a spirit) to the image. Thus, the image will have the ability to declare the greatness of the antichrist and demand that the image be worshipped. Those who refuse will then be killed. Rev. 13:15 There was an interesting article in the news the other day where scientist are become concerned that robots will one day become smarter than men and take over running the earth. That there are believers in the tribulation is evidenced by a group who stand before the Lord having fully resisted all attempts to get them to worship the person of the antichrist or his image. Rev. 15:2 They paid a price for their resistance and refusal but the reward was eternal and everlasting. They are graciously received into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus and are granted to sit on thrones because of their spiritual bravery. Rev. 20:4 We face the image of jealousy in the end of the age . Eze. 8:3.

55

Ezekiel was once again privileged to stand in the glorious presence of the Lord. It is the usual the method with which the Lord deals with mankind. First the revelation of His glory, His mercy and His grace, then judgment on those who are persisting in their sin. Eze. 8:4 The Lord is about to show Ezekiel what He sees. If we could know all that the Lord knows, our reaction would be swift and furious. He is about to open the eyes of Ezekiel to the religious corruption being conducted behind closed doors. The Lord speaks of great abominations and then of even greater abominations. Eze. 8:6 The day will dawn where the hidden things found among the people of the Lord will be openly revealed. 1 Cor. 4:5 The spiritual conditions of today will not continue on and on. There is a time of cleansing due to come from the Lord. The cleansing of the sanctuary, which is the perfection of the bride (Eph. 5:27), as yet does not have its fulfillment in the church age. Dan. 8:14

Ezekiel is brought to a door of the court. An entrance, a time of disclosure. He found there a hole in the wall which he apparently is told to enlarge that he might look in upon the abominations which the leaders of Israel were involved. Again, it must be said that there is

nothing hidden from the eyes of the Lord with whom we have to deal. Heb. 4:13 When commanded of the Lord, he entered into the secret chambers and found seventy men worshiping false gods in the sanctuary. There he beheld all manner of drawing and paintings of serpents and other abominable beasts on the walls as objects of worship. Eze. 8:9-10 The seventy were the chief council of Israel. Moses had appointed seventy to accompany him as he ascended the mount that they might worship the Lord as he went into the presence of the Lord. Ex. 24:1 These were appointed to their office as leaders and spiritual advisers to the people. They were called ancients, therefore were physically, older men. They are also elders, or men of wisdom and understanding in the things of the Law. Eze. 8:11

Each of them had a censer burning the incense of the Lord in worship to their idols. Their incense, intended to be a sweet smelling savor before the Lord had become an obnoxious stench to Him. The only one of them mentioned by name is Jaazaniah (heard of Jehovah), he no doubt was the ring leader of these who were involved in this abomination. Not only did the Lord hear them but he saw every action. Foolishly, their attitude was that the Lord did not see them. They also accused Him of forsaking the land. What a flimsy excuse. The cause of spiritual dearth, whether in their day or in ours is the thing which always separates people from the Lord, iniquity. Isa. 59:2.

56

We have but to read the history of Israel to learn what the future holds and the things which shall come to pass. It is even as Solomon said; there is nothing new under the sun. The actions of those of the past, foreshadow the future. Eccl. 1:9 The perverted worship which is recorded by Ezekiel is an introduction to that which even now is in great evidence. Like in the days of Ezekiel there are even greater abominations to come. Eze. 8:13 Tammuz is identified as a Phoenician deity who is also found in other ancient mythologies under various names. He was slain by a boar and descended into the nether world. He was the idol of beauty and licentiousness. Not only was remembered by the weeping of the women but it was a time of wanton corruption and iniquity. This activity took place in what is our month of July.

Surely, that was the ultimate of false worship, but no, Ezekiel was introduced to an even greater abomination. This time he was taken into the inner court of the Lord's house. An intrusion into the sanctuary by approximately twenty five men who are seen worshipping the sun. What a contrast to the call of the Spirit which was prophesied by Joel. He called for weeping between the poach and the altar, or heart felt repentance and turning to the Lord. Joel 2:17 Note that the people of the Lord were to be gathered for it was a time of cleansing or sanctification. Joel 2:16 When this is accomplished then he would send them corn, (the Word), wine (the joy of the Spirit of the Lord) and oil (the precious anointing of the Holy Spirit). Joel 2:19 They are liberated from their enemy. Joel 2:20 They are taken into the wilderness. Joel 2:23 Rev. 12:6, 14 All this the result of a combination of the early and the latter rain, in the first month, the month of new beginnings. Joel 2:23 This is the last day revival.

We find here in these two prophecies the extremities of the last days, gross deception and a time of true worship and revival. We are aptly warned that there is one coming, in great power, producing signs and wonders, through a satanic spirit, who will convince those who do not love the truth that he is the Christ. 2 Thess. 2:9-10 Incidentally, the word used here for his coming, is the Greek word parousia, the same word as used for the coming of the Lord Jesus or the rapture. Consider the possibility of those who have just a casual knowledge of what takes place at the coming of the Lord Jesus could be deceived by a false rapture. He received a deadly wound and was healed causing all the world to marvel. Rev. 13:3 The false prophet will cause the unsaved people of the earth to worship the antichrist. He will produce great wonders and will cause the world to make an image of the beast (idol worship). Rev.13:11-14.

57

So common, so widespread was the idolatry of Judah that it had become common place. Sin is deceptive, when practiced over a prolonged period of time, it no longer troubles the conscience of those involved. Their actions had become habitual to a degree where they could no longer see any harm in worshiping the gods of the heathen. The feelings of the Lord and His Word had indeed become imatter of no consequence to them. Disobedience to the Word of the Lord in one area of life will open the door for a flood tide of every kind of

unrighteousness. As a result, there was no restraint and the land was filled with violence of every sort. This is applicable for today as well as it was in their day. Sin is a reproach to any people. Prov. 14:34.

The mixture of their worship, the use of idols to represent the Lord was a matter of great provocation to the Lord. Rightfully, He became angry with them. A mixture of spiritual and carnal is obnoxious to Him. When Israel left Egypt, for whatever reason, there were those who were not Israelites who joined with them. There was a goodly number of them for they are called a mixed multitude. Ex. 12:38 It was among this mixture that trouble started. They were a disruptive force among the people and stirred them up to complain against the Lord. Num. 11:4 In a time of renewal there is to be a separation from such. The people who returned to Jerusalem after their captivity in Babylon, separated themselves from those who were not true Israelites. Neh. 13:3 Nehemiah very strongly rebuked the mixture and demanded a change. Neh. 13:23-30 The Lord will find Himself a fully separated people who will be the Bride of Christ in the end of the age. 2 Cor. 6:17.

They put the branch to the nose. This is one of those not too obvious, yet very obvious statements of a prophetic vein which we periodically find in the Word. They sniffed at the branch, in other words they had great disdain for the branch and rejected it. To whom else would the Lord be referring except to the man whose name was to be The BRANCH. Zech. 6:12 This is one of many names given to the Lord Jesus which relate to a work or to the nature of the person so named. As the Son of Man, He is a descendant of Jesse and was to have authority and leadership as a rod, a scepter, a King. Isa. 11:1 He is the righteous Branch, the King of kings who would be born of the lineage of king David. Jer. 23:5 Most importantly, the responsibility of building the true Temple, the Bride of Christ, rests upon Him. Zech. 6:13. The glory of the Lord is revealed in Him. He has a dual ministry, that of Priest and King and will rule and reign eternally. They put the Branch to the nose, they rejected the chief corner stone, the foundation of salvation.

Mt. 21:42 Amazingly, they put it to the nose and they still do.

compassion.

Lam. 3:22 However, there is a limit, a line of demarcation, beyond which His willingness to exercise His perfect patience will not reach. There is a time and a season for everything. Ecc. 3:1 We are quickly approaching the moment when the Bride will be chosen, married and then carried into her place which has been prepared for her. Inasmuch as she goes out on eagle wing power, or the power of the Holy Spirit, He (the Spirit) will go with her and remain with her for the duration of the tribulation period. Rev. 12:14 The restraint against iniquity which He now exercises will be removed and absolute unrighteousness and ungodliness will prevail on the earth during the tribulation. 2 Thess. 2:7 Iniquity will reign in its fullness, completely unhindered and without restraint of any kind. The vileness of the heart and life of humankind during that period of time staggers the imagination.

In his vision, Ezekiel heard a shout, loud and clear in his ears. The Lord was making certain that he "got the message." Eze. 9:1 The time had come for a separation, a cleansing to take place, destruction was at the door. Those who would escape were to receive a special mark identifying them as being worthy for deliverance. The others would be destroyed by those who watched over the city. Prior to the second coming of the Lord Jesus, the Lord has established a day in which the spiritual status of all alive will be sealed. The unjust, the filthy will remain forever in that condition. The righteous, the holy will continue in their holiness. Rev. 22:11 Note, this event is scheduled prior to the second coming for in both verse seven and twelve of Revelation twenty-two the statement is made, "Behold I come quickly."

Six men of judgment appear with a seventh who is a scribe and is seen carrying a writers inkhorn by his side. Six is the number of man. These who are associated with punishment portray the end of the age. The tribulation period, which is at the very end of the six thousand years, of the dealings of the Lord with mankind on the earth will climax His works with total destruction of the earth as it now is. Jer. 4:23 Seven is the number of perfection. The seventh man is the man who will receive or reject the people of that age. He measures them and will evaluate whether or not they are worthy to be spared from the destruction about to be loosed on the city. There is only one by whom the Bride may be measured and who is worthy to be the measuring

rod of God. Those measuring up to the measurer will be made to be in His image and in His likeness. Rev. 21:7.

59

Our attention is drawn to the seventh man in several ways. One of them being the fine linen with which He was arrayed. This expensive material was used by the rich. Luke 16:19 The very foundation of salvation is built upon the riches of the goodness, the forbearance and the long suffering of the Lord, which brought us to repentance. Rom. 2:4 From the very beginning of our spiritual life we begin to enter into the riches of God as they are revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Riches which are unfathomable and inexhaustible, of such great magnitude that they are beyond the ability of man to comprehend. Rom. 11:33 Now, could it possible be that in expecting God to make the church rich with worldly goods we are misplacing our expectation? Paul urged the church that if they were truly raised with Christ, to seek the riches which are from above. To focus our desires, our love and affection on things which are above and not on the things of this earth. Col. 3:1-2 The real and everlasting source of great riches are to be found in the glory of the Lord. The Lord is the source of all that is necessary and vital for natural and more importantly spiritual life. Phil. 4:19 Our first efforts and choice must be those things which pertain to the spiritual man. Then, what is needful will be added to us. Mt. 6:33 Eternal riches are vastly more valuable than all the riches of this world. That which is eternal is everlasting and will never diminish. That which is of this world loses value over night, and is not trustworthy, in the end it will all pass away. The riches of Christ are accompanied with great joy and happiness which will not fade away. 1 Tim. 6:17

Kings and those in high authority were also clothed with linen. This is made evident by the exaltation of Joseph to second in command in Egypt. Joseph had full power and the complete ability to act even as Pharaoh, for he was given the signet ring containing the seal of the kingdom. The gold chain about his neck was not only a sign of his allegiance to Pharaoh but a sign to all that Joseph was a person of significant standing and a political leader in the country. Gen. 41:42

Most importantly fine linen was the material used extensively in both the Tabernacle in the wilderness and Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. Nothing indicated the value and significance of the very finest of linen

like that which was worn by the high priest who was a type of the Lord Jesus. Ex. 39:2-5 By the description given, the certain man who appeared to Daniel could have been none other than the Lord Jesus. Daniel alone saw Him in His great glory. What a majestic occasion and thrilling experience for Daniel. Dan. 10:5-7.

60

The shattered body of the Lord Jesus was received from the cross, wrapped in a linen cloth and laid in the sepulcher. Mk. 14:51 The righteous high priest is also the perfect sacrifice. The righteous one dying for the unrighteous. Raise by the glory of the Lord and now, as the one and only mediator, the true High Priest, He represents the repentant before the throne of grace. 1 Tim. 2:5.

The end of the age is a time of great contrasts. The Bride of Christ will be clothed with linen, or the righteousness which is the righteousness of the saints. The very essence of the holiness of the Lord will be manifest in her in all of its power and completeness. Rev. 19:7-8 The army of the Lord will be dressed with the same fine linen as they go forth for the ultimate defeat of the powers of darkness. Rev. 19:14 In this scripture we are given an insight as to the nature of these linen garments. They are described as white, Gr. leukos, which is derived from the word luke or light. Therefore we know that this material, which is called fine linen, is in all actuality the light of God. For God is light. 1 John 1:5 They are beings of light and are clothed by very God, Himself.

Rev. 19:14.

In contrast to all that which is marvelous and beautiful there is to arise, and is unquestionable being formed today, a false church which to the unsanctified and the unsaved eye will appear to be the answer to the prophetic statements of the Word. It will have a gorgeous appearance and will appeal to the natural, carnal man. It is clothed with a gaudy array of jewelry. Rev. 18:12 It is seen as a false bride, an amalgamated religion embracing all of the beliefs of the world and molding them into one. She too, is clothed with fine linen which may be shocking to some but that conclusion is drawn from the Word of the Lord. False Apostles will be utilized to lead the so called, Christian world, into a unity and compromise with all other religions, including Satanism. His ministers will appear as light bearers and a righteous

individuals and deceive many. 2 Cor. 11:13-15 This false bride is identified as a city (The Lord has a city too, the New Jerusalem), There is but one city in the world today which has become the center, the heart of the three major religions of the world. There is a reason for the extreme interest shown toward that city. The final message concerning the Lord Jesus will be declared there by the two witnesses who will be the last to die as martyrs. Rev. 11:3, 8. The city is identified by these words, where "our Lord was crucified." These two witnesses are then resurrected together with all the righteous in the first resurrection at the close of the tribulation period. Rev. 11:12.

(continued in 61-80)