

The Book of Ezekiel (161-180)

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The pride of Egypt likened to that of Assyria. Pride, whether it be national or that of an individual is a forerunner of a downfall. Pr. 16:18 We find in the scriptures that Asshur is used in a threefold manner, as the name of a man. 1 Chron. 1:17. Likewise the name of a city or a people. Num. 24:22, 24 Also the name of one of their gods, who was to them the god of strength and power in warfare. Hos. 14:3.

In the description given concerning the great stature of Asshur, there are some foreshadowing's of the spirit and nature of the antichrist. It was the envy of the trees in Eden, the garden of God. Eze. 31:9 In this prophecy, the Lord speaks of the great beauty of what He referred as a stately cedar tree, towering above all the other trees of the forest, causing them to have to look up to him. Its branches were of great beauty spreading out over the forest. There was a great supply of waters, from flowing streams and deep fountains, causing it to flourish. It was a gathering place for the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, even reaching out to the nations of the world who gathered beneath its shelter. It was majestic in its beauty with its boughs which spread out for great distances. Its roots were planted deep because of the great supply of waters. It was so distinct in its character that the other trees of the garden of God felt that they could not equal it in all of its majesty. Eze. 31:2-9 We get the impression of one who is haughty, high minded and deeply impressed with their self importance.

For such a tree to have so impressive a place and appearance in the very Paradise of God illustrates once again the outstanding nature and character of the one who will be the antichrist. Everything about that special tree is unique and exceptional, to an astonishing degree. From the description given it is the most majestic and beautiful of all the trees in the garden. The appearance and appeal of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was exceedingly attractive, or Eve would never have partaken of it. She completely failed to see beyond that first appeal to the eye and the supposed knowledge and pleasure that she would gain by partaking of it. She had no comprehension of the dark side of sin and its consequences. Her vision was limited to that

which is common to mankind. She believed the lie of the serpent that she would be come as wise as God. She was like those described in 2 Tim. 3:6 who will see only that which is the exterior and miserably fail to consider the cost of being turned aside by the pomp and grandeur of that one who is to be revealed in the end of the age.

2 Thess. 2:3 Christ will not return until after the son of perdition has been revealed for He will destroy the antichrist at His coming. 2 Thess. 2:8.

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An allegory of the trees used of the Lord to announce the destruction of the Assyrian. Their fall was of such heinous degree that the trees of the forest, the other nations are silenced and dumbfounded by the fall. All because of the excessive pride of his height, his position among the nations and the attitude of his heart. Eze. 31:10 He was to be delivered into the control of the mighty one (Nebuchadnezzar) of the heathen for destruction because of his wickedness. The tree is felled, the nation and all that it represents will be destroyed and left lie cut up and broken. All that at one time took shelter in its glorious stature and beauty fled and completely deserted it. They were made fully aware of their human nature and the ultimate destruction of all flesh. Eze. 31:12-14 Earthly rulers, in their pride of position, power and office are prone to forget the Lord or they give minimal attention to Him. In ignorance they do not realize that the Lord, "rules in the kingdom of men," giving it to whomever He will. And sets over it the lowest of men." Dan. 4:17 Good, bad or indifferent all world authority is in the hands of the Lord. The existing authorities are but tools in the hands of the Lord to work out His will. Rom. 13:1-4.

All this was addressed to Pharaoh by the Lord who knew the heart of Pharaoh better than Pharaoh himself. The Lord issued a challenge which could well be directed at every and all world leaders. "Whom art thou like in thy greatness." Eze. 31:2 History is filled with great dynasties but because they did not honor the Lord, they were caused to fall like this great cedar tree, Assyria. The nations were all effected by the down fall of the mighty nation of Assyria. He was cast into the pit, into the bowls of the earth and with him those who placed their trust and confidence in him. The prophecy, though directed to Pharaoh, has its end time connotation proclaiming the destruction of the kingdom established by the ungodly trinity found in the book of

Revelation. The antichrist and the false prophet will be cast alive into the lake of fire, i.e. hell. Rev. 19:20 It is likewise the ultimate eternal residence of the devil. Rev. 20:10.

Of this we may be certain, Pharaoh was amply warned of the impending judgments which were about to fall upon him. The next prophecy came in the form of a lamentation, a funeral dirge, a message of mourning and sorrow. Eze. 32:2 How typical Pharaoh is of humanity as a whole. The Lord is faithful in speaking to our hearts, warning us of the pitfalls that lie ahead in a life style that is displeasing to Him, but, all too often we hear but do not comprehend or react properly with repentance and correction of our ways. It is time to take a lesson from Pharaoh and do the will of the Lord.

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Pharaoh compared to a young lion, filled with malicious energy and destructive force. Like a monster (NKJV) in the midst of the seas. In Bible language, the sea is typical of the masses of humanity. The bursting forth, might cause one to think of the alligator or dragon which like a flash of lightning springs out of the water and grasps its prey. A man creating troubled waters, contaminating the waters with the feet of his armies. We are given the picture of a cruel and despotic individual whom the Lord is about to bring to an end. Eze. 32:2 When we consider the report of such nature we cannot help but see in him a type of the ungodly ruler who will arise in the end of the age and control the whole world.

In the prophecy he is warned of the Lord concerning the price he will pay because of his evil deeds. He was to be caught in the net of the Lord and thrown out on the land where the birds and beasts of prey will devour him. In all reality the way that the carcasses are thrown about on the mountains and in the valleys the judgment was not only against Pharaoh but also against his armies. Eze. 32:3-5 The forces of darkness are increasing quickly in the day and hour in which we live. The net of evil which is being created by mankind will result in their captivity and judgment. Eccl. 9:12 The beast (the antichrist) and his false prophet will be taken, captured and cast alive into the eternal lake of fire. Rev. 19:20 The spirit and nature of unbelief and anti godliness begins as a small stream with the Pharaohs of the past and reaches a roaring, flooding stream just prior to the coming of Christ.

Quite suddenly a pure prophetic utterance is given which concerning the dealings of the Lord in the last days. The antichrist will be put out, or have his light turned off. This is another indication that he will originate from among the people of light, i.e. the church. Oddly enough, there are and will be many more whose light is darkness and how great is that darkness. Mt. 6:23 Of this we may be certain, the light of the wicked will be put out. Job 18:5-6 The Lord is merciful and always warns of impending judgments.

Thus, giving mankind an opportunity to repent and escape that which is about to happen. This is particularly true of the end of the age. As it was in the land of Egypt (Ex. 10:21-13), there will be a time when the lights of the universe will be turned off and that same kind of darkness will prevail. As a warning sign the Lord will cause a third part of the sun, the moon and the stars to withhold their light. Along with that the day will be darkened and the night also for a third or for a combined total of sixteen hours. Rev. 8:12 The darkness of Egypt will return, a darkness so dense that the Egyptians did not move for three days. Remember, there was light in Goshen.

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Signs which must precede the second coming of the Lord Jesus. "And then they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud." Luke 21:27 When these things BEGIN to come to pass, THEN LOOK UP, for your redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21:28 Now, just what are the things, the signs which announce His return? Signs, in the sun, the moon and the stars. Luke 21:25 Ezekiel under the inspiration of the Lord proclaimed a darkened heavens. Eze. 32:8 Isaiah linked this occurrence with the destruction of the universe and the eradication of sinners. Isa. 13:9-13 Note it is called, the day of His fierce anger. We take note also that Jesus affirmed that all this would be immediately AFTER, or at the conclusion of the great tribulation. Mt. 24:29

Note the events which are usually associated with the rapture, that Jesus said, would come to pass at the close of the great tribulation. He comes with clouds, and when He does, all will see the coming of the Son of man. Mt. 24:30 Then they shall see the sign of the Son of man in heaven. At this time, immediately after the tribulation, He will send His angels with the great sound of a TRUMPET. It is here, at this time, that He will gather His own from the four quarters of the earth. Mt. 24:31.

An emotional time such as never has been will be manifest among the unsaved leaders and peoples of the world. Ezekiel said their hearts would be greatly vexed or troubled. Eze. 32:9 Jesus said that men's hearts would fail them for fear of those things which were coming to pass on the earth. Luke 21:26 The element of fear in Ezekiel's day was the power of the sword of the Lord which was very evidently against Pharaoh. Eze. 32:10-11 An event which was to cause all to fear and tremble for their lives. What an awesome sight, a sharp sword flashing back and forth from the mouth of the Lord Jesus. It is the Word of His mouth, spoken under the full anointing and authority of Almighty God. In that day all nations will feel the effect of His living Word. Rev. 19:15 At the time of the battle of Armageddon, (Rev. 16:16) Jesus is shown coming as a thief in the night, at a time when great darkness will prevail. Rev. 16:15 Note carefully, that when He comes as a thief, the heavens will explode with a great noise. The elements of the earth will all melt with His fiery appearance. Every work of man, in every city of the world, will be utterly destroyed by fire. 2 Pet. 3:10 The Lord Jesus will come with flaming fire taking vengeance on the ungodly. 2 Thess. 1:7-8 His coming as a thief is not to the saved, the redeemed, but to the ungodly and the antichristal element which will prevail in that day. The saved are not in darkness that that day should come upon them as a thief in the night. 1 Thess. 5:4.

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The destruction of Egypt a great shock to the people, they are stunned. Ezekiel said; that the kings of the earth shall be filled with extreme fear when they hear concerning the utter destruction which was to come on Egypt. They will shudder with terror and be overwhelmed with fear for their lives as they see the mighty fall of Egypt. Eze. 32:10 What Ezekiel prophesied against Pharaoh is repeated, this time against great Babylon, the last day harlot church. Because of her extreme pride (Rev. 18:7) she will be utterly destroyed in one day (Rev. 18:8). Those who had been her paramours, the kings of the earth, the merchants made rich by her merchandising dare not assist her but stood afar off, weeping, filled with consternation and fear. Rev. 18:9-10 There is no help or consolation offered by these, but rather, we find that they are filled with great concern because of their loss of the source of their livelihood. Rev. 18:11, 19.

The warning against Egypt was one of complete desolation of the land and everything that was in it. All who lived there were to be destroyed. Eze. 32:15 Jeremiah spoke of a time to come when after the battle of Armageddon the earth would return to the condition found in Gen. 1:2. A world without form and void. Jer. 4:23 At the time of the second coming of Christ the topography of the whole earth will be completely altered. Nothing will remain as it is today. Rev. 6:14 The cities of the nations will all disappear and be found no more. Rev. 16:19 In response to Isaiah's question, the Lord responded with a prophetic utterance, "Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land utterly desolate." Isa. 6:11 The city of the millennial age and for eternity is the new Jerusalem. The beauty and majesty of that glorious city will be sufficient and totally satisfying for all. Rev. 21:2.

Not only was Egypt to be utterly defeated but the nations who joined with her, called her daughters, were also to receive the same punishment. They are all found to be occupants of the grave, hell and the pit. There is no question as to the utter destruction which was to come upon them. The sword of the Lord was about to be released upon them by the armies of Babylon. The Lord uses the heathen for His own purposes. The message to each of the nations who had joined themselves to Egypt was the same as that given to Egypt. While they were in the land of the living they were a terror to the nations of the earth. Now, they, the brave and bold warriors were to experience the fear which they had caused in the hearts of others. Eze. 32:18-32.

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Ezekiel was commanded of the Lord to have the children of his people prepare a watchman whose duty was to watch for the impending sword of an invading country. The interesting point here is that the sword was that which the Lord sent against that land. Yet, if the watchman blew the trumpet as a warning that the enemy was about to attack and the people responded, they would in that manner deliver their own soul. Eze. 33:1-5 When they failed to heed the warning, the responsibility for the shedding of their blood rested upon each unresponsive individual. Here, before us is one of the many times when the soul is identified with the blood. Verse 4 it is blood, verse 5 it is soul. The life giving force of the blood, the work horse of the body, is the soul of mankind. Lev. 17:11 In a Messianic statement made by

Isaiah, he referred to Jesus pouring out His soul unto death. Liquids are poured. Isa. 53:12 In the Messianic Psalm the thought of being poured out is used pertaining to the crucifixion of Christ. Ps. 22:14 Soul and spirit are not one and the same. Even though the scripture uses them interchangeably there is a definite, discernable difference between them. The soul is the life of the natural man and dies because of sin. Eze. 18:28 The spirit is the eternal part of man.

Full accountability rests on the watchman. Failure to give warning would cause him to be held responsible for all who would die in their iniquity and whose blood was shed. Eze. 33:6 Then the Lord spoke to Ezekiel and confirmed him to be the watchman of the house of Israel. He was commissioned to take the Word of the Lord to them as a warning from the Lord. What would Sundays message be like if those who stand in the pulpits of the world would hear from the Lord His word of warning. He was not instructed to speak harsh or mean and cutting words but to declare truth. The truth of the Lord. Ezekiel's words were to be directed at the wicked in the house of Israel. In declaring a message against sin he delivered himself from the responsibility of the eternal destiny of the sinner in Zion. If he did not present a clear trumpet sound but compromised, he then was made accountable for those who died in their sin. Eze. 33:8 Contrariwise, when having warned the ungodly and they do not respond, all responsibility for their dying in their sin was removed. Eze. 33:9 Rest assured that there will arise a ministry in these last days which will speak straight to the hearts of the people. It will cause many to leave the easy going, casual church of today for we are told that there would arise a generation having itching ears who would gather in abundance the type of teacher that they know will not make them feel uncomfortable. 2 Tim. 4:3-4.

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The response of Israel to the message of Ezekiel was identical to that of those in our day who are rebuked of the Lord. We are human. Your words are strong words. If we pine away, that is, dwindle away until we perish how can we live. Eze. 33:10 The way of the Lord is too hard. In all actuality, the way of the Lord is the easiest way. He is always present to help when we follow the pattern of life that He has laid out before us. Good understanding gains favor, but the way of the transgressor is hard. Pr. 13:15 Contrary to the thinking of some

individuals, the Lord said that He found no joy in the death of the sinner. Therefore the call in that day as well as today is for all, including the house of Israel to turn from their ungodly ways and follow the Lord. He is a living God and would impart His eternal life to all who will turn to Him in repentance. Eze. 33:11.

All Bible doctrines must be founded upon the Word of the Lord. If our hearts are not right with the Lord the statements made here by the Lord are extremely serious and need to be considered carefully and heeded. In spite of a record and history of righteous living, if a soul commits sin, that individual will end their clean record and wipe out the righteousness of the past. They will be considered to be unrighteous in the sight of the Lord. On the other hand, if the sinner turns to the Lord in repentance, their past record of sin is obliterated. By token of their repentance they are made to be in right standing with the Lord. That is either extremely good news or bad news, depending entirely on the spiritual status of the person involved. Eze. 33:12

The Lord verified the fact that the iniquity of the individual, regardless of their past righteousness, would yield death. Eze. 3:20, Eze. 18:24-26, Eze. 33:18 Let those who would live in disobedience to the Word take heed. The Lord means just what He has declared.

All sin which has been confessed to the Lord He is duty bound to forgive. Not only does He forgive but He cleanses us from the power of sin which in the past controlled our life. 1 John 1:9 The Lord removes not only our record of sin but He also wipes it from His memory and will never again make any reference to it. It has been blotted out completely. Isa. 43:25 As far as the East is from the West even so far has He removed our sins from us. Ps. 103:12 He has cast the totality of forgiven sin behind His back. Isa. 38:17 The sinner will not have his past mentioned in any way.

Eze. 18:22 Any memory that He would have of the past life of sin has been cast into the depths of the sea. Mic. 7:19 The reward for having confessed sin and finding the pardon of the Lord is exceedingly great. Contrarily, if the righteous sinner the judgment is just as great. It carries a sentence of death. Eze. 33:13.

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Here is an insight into the feelings of the Lord concerning their financial conduct. Raiment given as a pledge, for the security of a loan

was to be restored before the setting of the sun. Ex. 22:26-27. Those refusing to follow the Word of the Lord committed what the Lord called an abomination. See Eze. 18:12-13 It carried the sentence of death or separation from the Lord. One of the cardinal sins being committed by the children of Israel was their refusal to bring the TITHE or tenth into the storehouse as they were instructed to do. It is not an item which we may disregard. The tithe was holy unto the Lord. Lev. 22:30 Furthermore, if that tithe was withheld, for what ever purpose, a fifth was to be added to it when payment was made. Lev. 20:31 So serious is the paying of the tithe that the Lord called it robbery when it was not paid. Added to that it was an act whereby the one who suffered immediate loss was the Lord. Will a man rob or defraud God? Mal. 3:8 Because of their refusal to fulfill the Word of the Lord they had brought a curse upon themselves. Mal. 3:9 Also, they robbed themselves from enjoying the great blessings of the Lord. Mal. 3:10-11 There is tremendous spiritual and financial blessing in being obedient to the Lord. So, when Ezekiel speaks of restoring that which was maliciously kept back, the restitution of that which was taken in robbery, he is speaking of the payment of the tithe. Eze. 33:15 It is a statute of life with the Lord.

Jesus, when rebuking the scribes and Pharisees called them hypocrites but at the same time commended them for their acts of tithing, and in that manner placed His seal of approval upon it. Mt. 23:23 Abraham paid tithes to the Lord Jesus who appeared to him, in a theophany, as a man named Melchisedec. From the description, the titles and genealogy given concerning Him, He could be none other than the Christ of God. Read His biography as recorded in Hebrews 7:1-8 There never has been a man nor will there ever be one who is so unique as this man Melchisedec.

Even so, the people complained that the way of the Lord was not equal it was not reasonable, out of balance and unequal. Eze. 33:17 His ways did not fit the pattern of life which they desired to live. Such an inflexible nation. When will they learn that the ways of the Lord are the ways of truth and eternal life. This is the third time that Ezekiel is instructed to speak in such a fashion to the children of Israel. Eze. 18:25, 18:29, and 33:17 The faithfulness of the Lord is very evident as He patiently deals with such a nation who so tenaciously persist in doing their own thing. The Lord compares this type of rebellion and

stubbornness to the sin of witchcraft. It is certain to bring rejection as it did to king Saul. 1 Sam. 15:23.

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The judgments of the Lord are always equitable. Mankind determines his eternal status by their manner of life. That basically, is their acceptance of the salvation which the Lord has prepared for those who will accept Him as Savior and redeemer. We are not righteous by good works but the blood of Christ which cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:7 We are made to be righteous through the utter obedience of Christ in fulfilling the role of a redeemer. Rom. 5:19 We are made new, created as a new creature when we believe Him and trust in Him as our righteousness. 2 Cor. 5:17 That righteousness is a manifestation of His life in those who are His. If we turn from that righteous life back to the old life, the prophet said that it was the way of death. While the sinner who turns from their sin will be made righteous and live. Humanity controls their own eternal destination by the life that they live. Serve Christ and live. Reject Him and die in sin. Eze. 33:18-20.

The hand of the Lord came upon the prophet. His ministry was that of a prophet but he did not prophesy except the Spirit of the Lord was upon him to speak forth the declaration of the Lord. He did not speak promiscuously nor at all times but waited for the inspiration of the hand of the Lord upon him. Eze. 33:22 The hand of the Lord is typical of the might and power of the Lord. Isaiah performed in a supernatural fashion when the hand of the Lord was upon him. 1 Kings 18:46 The hand of the Lord came upon Elisha and divine instructions were issued. 2 Kings 3:15 If the prophecy is not inspired by the anointing of the Spirit, or the hand of the Lord, then it is a lie and not from the Lord. The individual who prophesies of his own spirit not only deceives himself but all who hear and believe what has been brought forth. Jer. 29:9 The hand of the Lord caused the heart and mouth of Ezekiel to be filled and he was able to proclaim the prophecy of the will and purpose of the Lord.

The measuring rod of the Lord was applied to Jerusalem and a warning from the Lord was issued. Those who were still in the land violated the Law of the Lord. Did they therefore have a right to possess the land? They committed heinous acts of unrighteousness in absolute disregard to the commandments of the Lord. Therefore, the sword and the

pestilence would come upon them. They would be destroyed in the ruined city and in the open field. The Lord would bring to an end "her arrogant strength" or her extreme pride and reliance on their own wisdom and ability to defend themselves and conquer their enemies. The Lord's attitude toward these acts of disobedience has not changed. Can modern day Jerusalem meet the divine standards of obedience and holiness as established by the Lord. "Should you then possess the land?" Eze. 33:23-29.

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The attitude of the people to whom Ezekiel was sent was one of polite mockery. They privately talked against him in their homes and in their streets but when it came time for him to prophesy, they gathered together as if though they had the greatest of interest in following the directions of the Lord contained in his prophetic utterances. In mockery, they gathered before him to hear the latest message. They seemed to accept his instructions while in his presence but when they went about their daily business they completely disregarded them. Their confession was that of one who loved much but their hearts were far from the Lord, because of their sinful practices. The prophet had become but an entertainer to them. A means whereby they could pass the time. It was as if though he played well on an instrument and sang a lovely song. They heard the words but refused to make them a part of their life. They heard, but did not act upon what they heard. Oh, how modern and up-to-date the Word of the Lord can be. Unfortunately for them, the day would come when they would realize that a true prophet had been among them but it would be too late. Eze. 33:30-33.

Now, his prophecies turn to the Sheppard's of the flock, to those in ministry. This message would not be pleasing and in some instances not be acceptable because of its negativity. It is a message of dire warning addressed against those who are looking out for themselves and have little, if any concern of feeding the flock. Most unfortunately many modern day messages are made to appease, to please and not feed or instruct with the whole of the Word of the Lord. The Lord was and will be greatly displeased with Sheppard's who are self willed and use the flock for their own purposes. They fleece and do not feed the flock. They take but do not give. They are self willed and focus on their own well being while ignoring the needs of the flock. Of such the Lord

said that He would place the responsibility of the flock directly upon their shoulders. The Lord purposed and promised that He would deliver the flock from such as these. Eze. 34:1-10.

The Lord will gather those who are His own. He will seek out those who are legitimately His. His sheep are those who hear His voice and follow Him. John 10:27 They are known by Him. He is also the good shepherd and knows personally those who are His sheep. In return they know Him. John 10:14 The flock of the Lord is comprised of those who know the Lord Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Those who do not believe in the Lord Jesus are not included in His flock because of their unbelief. John 10:16.

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The Lord will search diligently for those who are the sheep of the Lord. They are to be gathered together. He calls them "my sheep." His sheep know His voice (the Word) and any other voice is strange to them and they will run from it. John 10:4-5 Those who are His sheep are the chosen, chosen by grace and not race. They are the elect, who are saved by grace and not by works. Rom. 11:5-8 The prophecy of Ezekiel which pertained to those in captivity in Babylon was fulfilled when Ezra and Nehemiah returned and rebuilt the city of Jerusalem and the temple. Any reference to the end times must be limited to those who are born of the Spirit and made to be members of the body of Christ. Those who are truly His sheep will be granted an abundance of all that is needful to produce healthy sheep. Eze. 34:11-12.

His sheep know His deliverance from bondage for He will bring them out of their bondage. They are to be fed in good pastures, the pleasant and wonderful things of the Word of the Lord. They rest in a good fold, a place of divine protection. On the mountain tops, exalted and lifted up in the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus Himself being the "Good Shepherd." John 10:11 The "Great Shepherd." Heb. 13:20 The "Chief Shepherd." 1 Peter 5:4 The "One Shepherd." John 10:16 He is also portrayed as the "Gentle Shepherd." Isa. 40:11 The prophecy is made to portray the coming of the Messiah who would be that one and only true shepherd. Eze. 34:23 He proclaimed Himself to be that Shepherd of the sheep as the Lord Jehovah.

The sick He will heal. The broken He will bind up. But, those who have taken advantage of the situation called the 'fat and the strong' will be

dealt with severely. The Lord will judge and separate all other species of animal from His flock and keep only the true sheep. The sheep of His pasture. Eze. 34:13-17 It is interesting to note that Jesus in His teaching on His second coming made it very plain that there would be a time when the goats and the sheep would be separated one from the other. Mt. 25:31-34.

There will be day when He will take to task the prophets who have prophesied of their own spirit and not the Spirit of the Lord. They have muddied the waters, trampled the grass of the fields until there is little left that is good and edible and His flock have had to eat the remnants. One of the signs of the last days, that is seldom if ever considered, is the fact of the itching ears of the people which demand an easy, watered down, muddied water gospel. 2 Tim. 4:3-4 A people of apostasy who cannot digest sound doctrine. Preachers of compromise who accommodate them with trampled grass, messages without inspiration or an anointing of the Spirit. There is a great division on the horizon where the Lord will expose those whom He called cattle and are not His sheep. Eze. 34:18-22.

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The Lord issued a proclamation that He would save His flock and surely He will in a great and grand fashion. Eze. 34:22 The true Shepherd, Jesus, of whom we previously made mention, was to be established as the descendent of king David, (whose name means, loving), as the eternal, everlasting King (prince) of His people. Surely Jesus is the greatest example of love and leadership to ever have existed and He is just beginning. He is the righteous Branch. The King who will reign in righteousness bringing forth judgment and justice in the earth. In His reign all will dwell safely, be they Jew or Gentile. As king of all He is given a very special name and is called the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Jer. 23:5-6 Sharing in that Millennial reign will be His bride to whom is given the same name. Her character will have been made to be like His for she shall be called, the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Jer. 33:16 He will have a glorious church without spot of wrinkle. Eph. 5:27.

One shepherd to lead and feed the sheep of His pasture. A man who was to be a servant of the Lord and king of the people. A descendent of David.

Eze. 34:23 Both, Jesus (Mt. 2:1) and David (1 Sam. 16) were born in Bethlehem. Both Jesus (Luke 3:23) and David (2 Sam. 5:4) started their life's work at the age of 30. While the Lord did not condone the failures of David, in essence, he was a man after the heart of the Lord. 1 Sam 13:14 Acts 13:22 When Jesus was baptize the Father called out proclaiming that He was his beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased. Mt. 3:17 The similarity of type and antitype continues on and on. Jesus is the true David, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Rev. 19:16 Of the reign of His government there will be no end. His kingdom is eternal.

Jesus is the, one and only true shepherd, the servant of the Lord, the root and off spring of David, the King/Prince and as such has made a covenant of peace with the sheep of His pasture. Eze. 34:23-25 It is an everlasting, unbreakable covenant which involves the certain mercies of David. David was constantly the recipient of the mercies of the Lord but the Lord Jesus is the one who imparts to His own, the positive mercies of heaven. A portion of those mercies according to Ezekiel is to be manifest in a wilderness. The interjection of a statement such as this, involving the covenant of peace, are not circumstantial but deliberate and foreshadow an event which will take place under that covenant. Under the most difficult of conditions when we are living under the covenant of peace we find the Lord preparing a table before us, in the very presence of our enemies. Ps. 23:5 Situations in life do not alter the promise of the presence of the Lord.

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"They shall dwell safely in the wilderness." Eze. 34:25 This is a promise which is to reach its fruition under the new covenant, the covenant of peace. The covenant of the "one shepherd". It is the covenant which involves the "sure mercies" of David, or Christ of whom David was a type. He, the one shepherd, will feed them and will be their only shepherd. Eze. 34:23 When is a wilderness not a wilderness or when is it transformed into a dwelling place, a shelter for the children of the Lord? That will take place when the presence of the Lord is manifest. There is very definitely the promise of a great renovation of the wilderness introduced in this promise of the Lord.

The Lord Jesus will take His church, His Bride, into the wilderness. Rev. 12:6, 14 It is aptly called "her place" and there she is fed for the

duration of the three and one half years of the great tribulation. Consider, Ezekiel stated that the evil beasts of the wilderness would cease from out of the land. The book of Revelation speaks of evil beasts, the Devil, the antichrist and the false prophet all of whom will ultimately be cast into the lake of fire and the land will be cleansed from their evil presence at the close of the tribulation. Rev. 19:20, 20:10

It is also recorded that they will dwell safely in the wilderness and be able to sleep where they will. In other words, living in absolute tranquility. Further more, the hill or the high place, the presence of the Lord will be there. The blessings of the Lord will be poured out abundantly upon them. It is here that the "river of God which is full of water" will be made manifest in the fullness of the power of the Spirit. The flow of the water of life through the church will be of such a mighty volume that all will be healed. Isa. 35:6 The peacefulness of the wilderness is seen in the statement that the "pastures are clothed with flocks." No wonder they sing and shout for joy, for the joy of the Lord is upon them. Ps. 65:9-13 The bursting forth of rivers and the revelation of a road of life in the wilderness is the evidence of a "new thing" the likes of which cannot be compared to anything but the extreme blessing of the Lord. Isa. 43:19 These promises are given to His people, His chosen. Isa. 43:20 They are the people of whom Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2:9 The chosen generation. Now for the question which always arises in the minds of the unbeliever. Can God? " Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" Ps. 78:19 Ezekiel has an answer. The tree of the field will yield her fruit and the earth its increase. Eze. 34:27 The Lord said that in comforting His people, His redeemed, that He would make their wilderness like the Garden of Eden, or the garden of the Lord. Isa. 51:3 The great bounty of the Lord will be copiously displayed in the midst of His Bride.

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The preaching of the Lord Jesus was accompanied by parable, which is an allegory, a type or a symbol. Mt. 13:34 The scriptures are filled with this manner of communication where in the prophetic vein it is used to illustrate the coming actions of the Lord. The Lord has veiled His plans while at the same time He has revealed them. It is even as the man of wisdom said; "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honor of kings to search out a matter." Pr. 25:2 He has wonderfully laid out

His plan of delivery for His Bride in the end of the age and we see portions of His works in the book of Ezekiel. When the Bride is transported into the wilderness (Rev. 12:6, 14) She is delivered from the enemy of her soul and from the beasts which are evidenced in the book of Revelation. The Spirit of prophecy spoke through him concerning the deliverance from the wicked who would have destroyed her, to a place of complete safety and peace. Eze. 34:28

It is very fitting that we consider here just exactly the composition of the new testament Israel. Paul, an Israelite of the highest degree, stated that they are not all Israel who are of Israel. Because they are of the seed of Abraham they still are not children of the Most High. The seed of the Lord is to be found in Isaac, for Isaac was the type of the offered son. Therefore the atonement which makes one to be a son of God is the offering of the Lord Jesus on Calvary. Then, deliberately Paul stated that, those born of the flesh are not the children of God but the children who have embraced the promises of the Lord are the children of the Lord. Rom. 9:6-8 It must be declared here that there is no race excluded from salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. No one nation of people have a corner on what the Lord has planned for those who love Him.

The Lord has promised that He would prepare a garden of renown, a garden (NKJV) of beauty and character. Eze. 34:29-30 The Bible history of mankind started in a garden with a husband and a wife who was created by the Lord from a bone taken from Adams side. We are now bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. The blood of the first Adam was shed that he might have a wife. The blood of the last Adam (Christ) was shed that He might have a wife. Acts 20:28 The description given by Isaiah is most appealing and beautiful. The Lord spoke to him and promised that the Lord would be a source of comfort to Zion. The garden to which He would take His Bride would be like the garden of Eden. This garden of great beauty will also be a place of joy, gladness and thanksgiving. The song of the Lord will be sung there with much rejoicing. Isa. 51:3.

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A prophecy against the enemies of Israel, namely Mount Seir which was occupied by the descendents of Esau or Edom. Josh. 24:4 Because of their continued animosity and hatred against Israel, judgment would

come upon them. Because of their attitude of heart the hand of the Lord would be against them causing utter waste and desolation. In their journeying through the wilderness the children of Israel desired to pass through the land of Edom but were turned aside by the Edomites. Num. 20:17-21 Thus a foundation was laid for a continuing animosity between the two nations.

The peoples of mount Seir, Ammon and Moab came against Israel to destroy them. 2 Chron. 20:10-11 The children of Israel reacted in a strange but Godly manner. Their army was led by the those who had a song of holiness unto the Lord. 2 Chron. 20:21 The song of praise and worship created an atmosphere in which the LORD joined in the battle by turning Ammon and Moab against Seir and when Seir was defeated they started in on one another to smite with the sword. 2 Chron. 20:23 It pays to do battle the Lords way.

It is worthwhile to note that the measure of their judgment was to be equal to the extent of their hatred, their anger, and their envy Eze. 35:11 Also the Lord declared that He had heard their multiplied words of blasphemy spoken against Israel as well as their boastful words spoken against the Lord. Sennacherib, the king of Assyria was one who surrounded Jerusalem and ridiculed the people, their leadership and their God.

2 Chron. 32:10-18 This cause Hezekiah and Isaiah the prophet to have a prayer meeting, where they earnestly sought the Lord. Consequently, the Lord sent an angel and destroyed the might men, the leaders and captains of the Assyrian army, causing them to retreat with much shame to their own land. Sennacherib was slain in the house of his god by his own children. 2 Chron. 32:21.

We need to take special note of the LORD making certain that they understood that this was the voice of the Lord GOD. Four times it is declared that it is the Lord GOD who is speaking. Twice He identifies Himself as the living GOD. Added to this, four times, He made Himself to be known by His glorious name, I am the LORD. The ever existing One. The Eternal, Almighty. To Moses He was I AM. Today we not only know Him by the great I AM but also as LORD, or Jehovah. He made certain that they well knew that their punishment would fit the crime and that its source was the very one whom they had challenged with ridicule and blasphemy. Eze. 35.

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A prophecy to the mountains or the high points of the land directed to the people. The divine instructions are to hear the WORD of the Lord. Not the word of fear but the voice of the living Lord. The enemy vocalized their threats and purposes against Israel. A voice of fear and defeat was used against them as the enemy declared what their accomplishments would be and how they would possess the land. However the Lord has a different program, not of defeat but of victory and life. From the mountains to the cities, there are six areas mentioned. Six is the number of man. Everywhere that defeat and desolation had reigned there was to come a change. The Lord appointed the heathen nations to attack Israel as a means of punishment for their ungodly deeds but they always went too far and angered the Lord in their boasting's. The shame that Israel had felt in being defeated and made desolate was now to become the portion of the those who had come against them. The rolls were to be reversed. Eze. 36:1-7

A prophecy of life and restoration promised to the people and the land. If these promises are to be fulfilled in the natural, how much greater will be their impact on a spiritual people. Mountains speak to us of high and conspicuous seasons of revival and the outpouring of the Spirit. The Lord promised His presence, an item which is always necessary for a move of the Lord. He also promised that the land would be tilled and sown. Eze. 36:8-9 The plea of the Lord to Israel after the flesh was that they break up the fallow ground, the heart, that which had been dormant and had become hardened. The plow and the harrow must be used until the land is opened to receive the seeds of righteousness. The difficulties and troubles which come our way are but the plowing of the Lord breaking up that which has been allowed to become hardened that He might sow seeds of righteousness and mercy in our hearts. Hos. 10:12

The only way that the soil can receive and drink up the rain is when it has been laid wide open by the plow. The desire of the Lord for the last day is to pour out of His Spirit in great abundance but if the land is not prepared to receive it, it is useless. Joel spoke of a double (full portion) of rain that would take place in the first month. The first month was the season of the Passover. All true revival is based on redemption through the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus. The combined of the two

seasons of rain, into one great and glorious manifestation of the ability and power of the Lord to save and to sanctify a people unto Himself, is in preparation for the revelation of the Bride of Christ and that is a certainty. Joel 2:3.

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One thing which we must remember concerning the book of Ezekiel is that it contains the prophetic voice of the cause of their captivity in Babylon and their subsequent delivery from captivity. Therefore its message was fulfilled in their release from Babylon and their return to the land of Israel. Israel, after the flesh, (1 Cor. 10:18) did not continue in the land because they continued their idolatrous ways. Jerusalem was destroyed and they were driven out again after the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. Consequently these prophecies do not pertain to a natural people of this day and time. Paul, an Israeli of the most religiously educated kind, asked and answered his own question as to the identification of the new testament Jew, those of the gospel dispensation. He is not recognized by natural birth or after the flesh but after the spirit. Rom. 2:28-29 As a result, the promises and the blessings of the Lord are directed toward those who are the spiritual seed of Abraham. Again, Paul plainly states that those who are after the flesh and have not embraced the promises of life in Christ, are not the children of God. But, the children of promise are those who are in Christ Jesus. None are barred from this status, which includes those after the flesh, providing there is repentance and acceptance of the one who bears the name, the Lord Jesus Christ. There is salvation in no other name. Acts 4:12.

Not only was the name of the Lord profaned in the home land but where ever these expatriates went they continued to pollute the name and the reputation of their God among the heathen. Eze. 36:10-20 But the Lord exercised pity on them, not because of who they were but because of His Holy Name. His name is of utmost importance to Him. His actions were based, not on the people, but for His Holy name's sake.

Eze. 36:21-22 Their return to Jerusalem was not because of their repentance and change of heart but as the Lord said; I will sanctify my great name. To show the holiness, the power and the authority of His name. Do you know His name? It is not God, that is who and what He is, but not His name. His name is of the utmost importance to us, for

salvation is in His name. Acts 4:12 All authority is available in His name. John 14:13 His presence is where His people gather in His name. Mt. 18:20 Signs follow those who believe in His name and in that glorious name they cast out devils and speak in new tongues. Mark 16:17 God, has given Him the greatest name of time or eternity. A name which all must acknowledge either now or in the future. Phil. 2:9-11.

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Is the Bible natural or spiritual. Or is it merely the history of the dealings of the Lord with a rebellious nation which refused to do His will. It is very evident that what the Lord had in mind to do for them was not because of who they were, or even their descendents but for His own names sake. Eze. 36:23 His name is exceedingly holy, to profane or dishonor His name is the highest of insults. To protect the honor of His name He would gather them once again into the land which He had given unto Abraham. By all means do not loose sight of the fact that Ezekiel was a prophet to Israel who was in captivity in Babylon. The promise of restoration into their own land was accomplished by their return under Ezra and Nehemiah. The actuality of the fulfillment of this prophecy is history. The promise of restoration was for those who heard the prophet. Eze. 36:24.

The prophecy of Ezekiel became Messianic as the Lord promised that they would go through a process of cleansing. The Lord would sprinkle clean water upon them. We know that John was deliberately born to be a forerunner of the Lord Jesus. Luke 1:17 John the Baptist came by baptizing "unto repentance." For that time, such a baptism was in the order and plan of the Lord. In their act of confession and baptism their sins were remitted. Thus the waters of cleansing were brought upon Israel. Mk. 1:4-5 Jesus incorporated and extended the necessity of the act of baptism for those who would follow Him, be they Jew or Gentile. The Lord is no respecter of persons. Mt. 28:19.

All must come through the one door which has His name upon it. "For there is no difference between the Jew of the Greek (Gentile): for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him." Rom. 10:12 Foolishly, the Word of the Lord is violated when we exalt one race above another in the gospel of Christ. We dare do what He does not do for the Word says; "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither

bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Gal. 3:28 The only thing which counts and has true value is that new creature in Christ who is made to bear His very image and His likeness. A place in the Lord Jesus where He becomes everything and all to everyone and all who are in the great SPIRITUAL family of the Lord. Col. 3:10-11 Mind you, these statements were penned by a man who declared himself to be an Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee. Phil. 3:5 a man well versed in the Law and the Prophets. He was one who totally loved his race and was willing to lay aside his salvation if only they would be saved. Rom. 9:3.

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The promise of a new heart, a new attitude and a new manner of life. Eze. 36:26 Without a new heart one may be religious but will fail miserably in developing a new life. In Christ Jesus neither living a life filled with religious practices nor abject heathenism have any value. That which the Lord would accomplish in those who come to Him is an entirely new man, a new creature, with a new heart. Gal. 6:15 The beauty of a new heart is the truth that all of the old life is forsaken and abandoned and the new heart will take over. 2 Cor. 5:17 In receiving a new heart and a new life there are instantaneous changes which take place. However there is also a process of spiritual growth. Looking into the mirror, the Word of the Lord, we are changed from glory to glory. The beginning is wonderful, the process may at times be painful but the final results are greatly to be desired and sought after. To be in His total image and likeness is absolutely the apex of the Christian life. 2 Cor. 3:18.

Real life, fullness of life, a totally enjoyable life is to be found in the Lord. Without Christ, no person has ever really lived for they are dead in trespasses and sins. Eph. 2:1 Jesus proclaimed that He had come into this world bringing life, yes, a more abundant life. John 10:10 He has promised that He will circumcise the heart by removing those things which are offensive to Him. The stony heart, the hard heart is removed. In its place He gives us a heart after His heart, pure and clean. Deut. 30:6 Thus, the door is opened for a deep love for Him involving the total man. Loving Him whole heartedly is the absolute epitome of love. He showers an overwhelming love upon the heart which is free from bondage and worldliness. A new heart will

thoroughly embrace the commandments given by the Lord Jesus to love the Lord and to love our neighbor with the same measure that we love ourselves. Mt. 22:37-40 The ultimate and finished product of a new heart is to develop a people, who in this case will be the perfected Bride of Christ, making them to be of one heart, united, blended together because they have the heart beat of the Lord within them, and they are perfectly joined with Christ. Jer. 32:39.

A new spirit. His Spirit now blessing those who have had their hearts made new. Eze. 36:26 The new spirit is found in the new birth where one is born of the Spirit of the Lord. As the Lord breathed the breath of life into Adam and he became a living soul, so, in the new birth, the spirit of life in the Lord Jesus Christ is breathed into those who come to Him. It is the law of the Spirit of life, of which He is the only source. Rom. 8:2.

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The importance of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer cannot be measured. In the presence of the Spirit the power of the Lord is made manifest. He, the Spirit, enables one to live according to the precepts of the Word of the Lord. Eze. 36:27 He reveals the Word to all who will hear His voice. Prov. 1:23 The evidence of being a son of God, is the leading of the Spirit. ALL, both Jew and Gentile are sons by adoption. It is the Spirit of the Lord who witnesses in the spirit nature of His own that they are indeed His sons and daughters. Rom. 8:14-16 The mighty workings of the Spirit in those who are the sons of God is too great and vast to evaluate at this time. As a conclusion, the presence of His Spirit elevates one to the blessed position of being the Temple of the Lord. They are assured of His continuous presence. 1 Cor. 3:16

The consummation of the promises of the Lord surely reach into the Millennial reign of Christ when His redeemed will occupy the earth. Eze. 36:28 A season of time, of a thousand years duration, which is the true Sabbath of the Lord. The book of Revelation outlines that period of time for us. Those who are resurrected in the first resurrection are kings and priests unto the Lord. Rev. 20:6 Here is the true WORD OF THE LORD, which is vital to a proper understanding of the end of the age. There are Christians who will enter the great tribulation period. Don't be fooled into thinking that all Christians will

totally escape that catastrophe. John saw a number of thrones, in heaven, occupied by people who had been beheaded For their witness of Jesus and their absolute adherence to the Word of the Lord. Rev. 20:4

The situation they faced and their rightful decision is so obvious. They live and reign with Christ for the thousand years. They were on the earth during the tribulation period and faced the choice of being able to buy or sell by receiving or rejecting the number, name or mark of the antichrist. They likewise refused all efforts to make them bow down and worship the beast or his image. Rev. 13:12-17 In spite of the spectacular display of deceptive and false signs and miracles, they would not succumb to the overwhelming and convincing works of falsehood. Another Divine evidence of Christians who are martyred during the tribulation are those who stand on the fiery sea of glass playing their harps. They were victorious over every devilish element thrown at them by the antichrist. Rev. 15:2 Make certain your theology is the truth. To not accept the Word of the Lord at face value can lead to deception. I challenge you to lay aside your preconceived ideas and STUDY the WORD to show yourself approved unto the Lord. 2 Tim. 2:15

(continued in 181-200)