

Friday, May 24, 2019

**Return**

Ezekiel 11-12

*"Therefore say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again.' 'They will return to it and remove all its vile images and detestable idols. I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God.*"  
Ezekiel 11:17-20

As the glory of the LORD lingers over the temple, a promise is made. It is a promise that has yet to be fully fulfilled. The glory will depart completely until it returns in the Person of Jesus the Christ. This will come in two advents (appearances). The first we know: when He came as the suffering servant. The final will come as He returns with great power. Also, the exiles would return as is told in this prophesy, but they have not yet fully experienced this return as described. There is another fulfillment coming, as God draws from the nations of our world today and brings His chosen people back to the land of Israel and gives them an undivided heart—a heart of flesh. That has not yet happened, but we are sure and confident that it will. There is a day coming when every knee will bow before the mighty King. There is a day coming when His chosen people will worship Him as described in these verses. I long for that day. I long to see this promise of God fully fulfilled. God is moving today and drawing His chosen people back from all around the world to the land that He promised to them. Praise His name for the exciting times in which we live! This must happen in order for prophecy to be fulfilled.

*Dear God, You keep Your promises. You are faithful. Thank You that in the midst of judgment You pause to remind Your people of Your truth. Stir in the hearts of Your people God. Draw them back to Yourself and fulfill Your promise according to Your grace and mercy and for Your glory. May You forever be praised! Amen.*

May 20 - 25, 2019

Saturday, May 25, 2019

**These Three Men**

Ezekiel 13-14

*... even if these three men—Noah, Daniel and Job—were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, declares the Sovereign LORD.*  
Ezekiel 14:13

Chapter 14 repeats the four judgments that will come against Israel. The judgments include famine, wild beasts in the land, the sword, and a plague (or pestilence). The false prophets were assuring the people that these things would not happen. God, speaking through Ezekiel, is promising that they will—and indeed they do. What interests me in this chapter is the mention of these three men—Noah, Daniel, and Job. Each is called "righteous" by God (Genesis 6:9; Job 1:1; Daniel 6:4-5, 22). What captures me is that in all of the time prior to Ezekiel's writing this prophecy, of all the men who had lived, three are chosen. I pause to ask myself, would I be listed? It's not that I need to be on the honor roll. I don't ask that of myself in a prideful way, but rather, genuinely. Does my love for the Lord show in who I am? My heart and my desire is to be a man of God. I desire to have my life be identified as a man who pursues God relentlessly. But truthfully, as I look at my heart, all too often I am a man who chases my own agenda. I'm sure each of these men probably felt the same at some time in their life. Doubt can take over if I let it. So I look to the Lord and trust that He is working in my life that which is pleasing to Him as He continues to shape me for His purpose.

*Dear God, thank You for these three men. Thank You for having them be an example of how I can choose to live my life. May You always find me ready to be shaped by You in this generation. Amen.*



Monday, May 20, 2019

## Eat

Ezekiel 3-4

*Then I looked, and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll, which he unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe. And he said to me, "Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the house of Israel." So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat. Then he said to me, "Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you and fill your stomach with it." So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth.*  
Ezekiel 2:9-3:3

Ezekiel would need to be filled with the word of the LORD. Jeremiah and John were both told to eat the word as well (Jeremiah 15:16; Revelation 10:9-10). This scroll contained the words of lament, mourning, and woe. The people in exile were under the impression that Jerusalem was indestructible. God continued to speak through His prophets that this was not true. Jerusalem would be destroyed. I would expect this to taste bitter. These types of proclamations should not taste sweet. How is it that words of lament, mourning, and woe can taste sweet? Again, Ezekiel understood the sovereignty of God. The word of the LORD is sweet. I think of Psalm 119 and the repeated expression of joy in the word of the LORD. I am tempted to believe that only the "happy" words of the LORD are sweet. God is just. God is love. God is holy. It is the kindness of God that leads people to repentance. God leads His people to repentance. I must be broken before the LORD before I can experience His filling Spirit in my life. My pride blocks my sense of His presence and places me in opposition to Him. The same had happened to the Israelites. Their pride had placed them in opposition to God and He would bring them to brokenness so that He could restore them. Even though this should be bitter, in actuality, it is sweet. I have found the same to be true in my life. Many times, the words I read that convict me of my sin are the sweetest words I read because, if I listen and if I repent, I find joy in restoration and revival (Isaiah 57:15).

*Dear God, thank You for Your words of conviction in my life. Thank You that You are a loving Father who disciplines me. Please help me see these "bitter" words as sweet. Lead me to brokenness so that You can revive my heart. Amen.*

Tuesday, May 21, 2019

## Embraced

Ezekiel 5-6

*Therefore as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, because you have defiled my sanctuary with all your vile images and detestable practices, I myself will withdraw my favor; I will not look on you with pity or spare you.*  
Ezekiel 5:11

The nation of Israel had embraced that which was detestable to God. They had given themselves over to worshiping that which was abhorrent to God. They had embraced it even more than those who didn't know God! Even though they knew that God judged detestable things, they held on to those things which were detestable. Because of this, they would not be spared. As God judged the sin, those who held on to the sin would experience the judgment the sin was receiving. They refused to listen and hear the warnings of God. In love, God deliberately and patiently made His will known, but they refused to listen. It would mean their undoing. I see this all around me today. People embrace that which is detestable to God and then become indignant and say that God is not loving because He does not accept them as they are. People must come to a place where they see that God will judge those things that are detestable to Him and if they choose to embrace those things that are destined for judgment, they will not be freed from that judgment themselves. But even more so, those who know Christ and His love and forgiveness must release their embrace on the sin in their lives! How can I embrace that which put my Savior on the cross? Forgive me, God.

*Dear God, how can I continue to embrace those sins in my life? Why do I continue to run to those things for comfort? Please forgive me and continue to give me victory. I have come so far in learning to embrace You. Please continue the work You have begun in me. Please, Lord, move in Your Church to release her embrace on detestable things. Let us shine Your light! Amen.*

Wednesday, May 22, 2019

## Detestable

Ezekiel 7-8

*And he said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing—the utterly detestable things the house of Israel is doing here, things that will drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see things that are even more detestable."*  
Ezekiel 8:6

Ezekiel is again given a vision. It is his second. The date is September 17, 592 B. C. Ezekiel is meeting with the elders and is taken by the Spirit to Jerusalem to see firsthand the detestable things that are happening in the temple. Ezekiel, as a priest, would have known fully what the covenant was and how worship was to happen in the temple. Chapter eight describes four examples of idolatrous worship. Each one is declared to be more detestable than the last. They had placed an idol in the temple (more than likely, a statue of Asherah), the elders were worshiping animals, women were crying out for a dead god to be brought back to life, and men had turned their back on the temple to worship the sun. Each of these was detestable and each was being practiced without any consideration of true worship. Because of this, God had been driven from His sanctuary. The place that had been built as a place for His presence to be on the earth was being defiled. In the process, their actions would drive God out. As God continues to make His point to the nation, the nation continues to refuse to listen. What are the things worshiped in my culture that are detestable to God and yet call out to His Church—to me? How can I help the Bride of Christ stand strong against the temptation to bring detestable things into the worship of God?

*O LORD, search me please. Is there any way in which I bring idolatrous things into my worship of You? I do not ever want that to happen but I fully realize that in many ways I have been desensitized to many of the things that You find detestable. I can so easily rationalize. Lead me to pure worship. Lead Your Church and Your people in pure worship of You and You alone. Amen.*

Thursday, May 23, 2019

## Departed

Ezekiel 9-10

*Then the glory of the LORD departed from over the threshold of the temple and stopped above the cherubim.*  
Ezekiel 10:18

There was great celebration on the day that the glory of the LORD came into His temple (1 Kings 8). God chose to make His dwelling among men and to have His glory reside in the temple that had been consecrated for that purpose. Yet, the people did not remain faithful to the covenant or the vows made at the time of consecration and so the judgment would come and the glory of the LORD would depart. Ezekiel is being given a vision of what will occur in the very near future. The Shekinah glory of the LORD will depart. The Shekinah glory of the LORD is the divine visitation of the presence or dwelling of the Lord God on this earth. The glory of the LORD is moving out. It has come to the threshold and paused; it is now rising above the temple and pausing again. As it pauses above the temple, the judgment of fire will be poured out on Jerusalem. The glory of the LORD has departed from His temple. Most are so out of touch with His presence they will not notice that He has left. It is the same for me. I have been indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. If I am not constantly aware of His presence leading and guiding me, I could get to a point where I would not even know His presence and wouldn't even recognize if He departed (see Judges 16:20).

*O LORD, I weep that Your glory left the temple and people scarcely noticed. My heart cannot begin to understand all that this means. Your covenant with Your people expressed Your heart for them. You came to them as a husband and they adulterated themselves in Your presence. Yet You continued to love them and reach out to them—but they did not see You. They did not notice when You left. Keep me aware of Your presence, please, Lord. Let me linger in Your love and Your power. May I be so aware of Your Spirit in my life that I ache when I am out of step with You. Amen.*