

# The Busy Season!

## Ezekiel Part Eight

### “A Little Sanctuary”

*“The LORD replied: Ezekiel, son of man, the people living in Jerusalem claim that you and the other Israelites who were taken to Babylon are too far away to worship me. They also claim that the land of Israel now belongs only to them. But here is what I want you to tell the Israelites in Babylon: It’s true that I, the LORD God, have forced you out of your own country and made you live among foreign nations. But for now, I will be to you a little sanctuary wherever you are, so that you can worship me.”*

*(Ezekiel 11:14-16)*

There were three deportations of Jews from Judea to Babylon from approximately 597 BC to 582 BC. The Babylonians took the wealthy, certain skilled people, and the nobility into exile. They left behind the uneducated, the poor, and those that the conquerors felt did not have anything to offer them. The small remnant that was left behind in Jerusalem formulated some radical beliefs during the time their brethren were far away in captivity. They claimed that the Judeans taken into exile in Babylon were too far away from Jerusalem to have a living union with God. They also claimed that the inheritance and the land belonged to them alone, and not the ones who were carried away to Babylon. In Ezekiel 11:15 God Himself informs Ezekiel of what is going on in the people back in Jerusalem concerning this view towards their brethren in Babylon.

In verse 16 God continues on to share with Ezekiel how He truly feels concerning His people that were in captivity at that time. God did not want His people in captivity to misunderstand His heart and their relationship with Him. He did not want the reports from His people in Jerusalem to discourage the hearts and faith of His people in captivity. God wanted the captives to get their information from Him, and not the gossip and opinions coming from the remnant in Jerusalem. Therefore the Lord speaks to Ezekiel saying, “Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come”.

Around this same time Jeremiah was ministering to the remnant still left in Jerusalem. Jeremiah was a man of God who heard from the Lord and knew His heart. Jeremiah wrote a letter from Jerusalem to the captives in Babylon expressing the way God felt towards His people in captivity. Listen to some of the words from Jeremiah’s letter to the captives; “I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the LORD; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope. When you seek me and come and pray to me, I will listen to you. When you search for me, yes, search for me with all your heart, you will find me” (Jer. 29:11-13). Verse 20 goes on to say, “Hear therefore the word of the Lord, all you exiles whom I have sent away from Jerusalem to Babylon”. The exiles in Babylon needed to hear the word of the Lord that was coming from Jeremiah and Ezekiel. They needed to hear the desire and purpose in God’s heart for them.

The people of God that were in captivity had to make a decision concerning which report they would believe. They could choose to believe the viewpoint of the remnant in Jerusalem that said they were cut off from God and no longer heirs of the land of promise. Or they could believe the Word of God through Ezekiel and Jeremiah that declared God was with them as a little sanctuary in the midst of their exile and chastisement. Ezekiel and Jeremiah were affirming that God’s heart had not changed during times of crisis and chastisement.



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rable can become exhausting events that I just want to get through! My heart has cried out in times past from under enormous work-loads saying, “Jesus, I just want to be with You and not miss one precious moment, but I am overwhelmed! Help!”. His answer to me was so valuable,

and has been ministering to my heart ever since. He told me, “It’s not in the DOING but in the DY-ING. I had to take time to consider what He meant by that. I thought about John 12:24 when Jesus told people who were seeking Him that unless a seed fell into the ground and died, it would bring forth nothing. From that scripture I was reminded of the preacher in Ecclesiastes who took so much labor under the sun, and was filled with emptiness, finding his work result in only vanity. How sad to look back on my own days and seasons of laboring under the Son and remember mostly frustration and anguish. Usually my frustration resulted in hurting the very people I was working so hard to bless. From those thoughts I reconsidered how the fruit of just “DOING” did not produce the love and blessing that was in my heart to give.

Therefore I began to consider “dying”. My first thoughts went to Jesus on the Cross. He was not doing a lot as He hung there, but in reality He was purchasing salvation for the whole world, conquering hell and the grave, and making all things new. Wow! He was that seed that fell into the ground and brought forth MUCH fruit! He didn’t work at explaining Himself to His accusers, or building a reputation to promote His cause. He didn’t spend endless hours trying to make people get on board with His plan and purpose. Jesus just laid down His Life in love and left the rest with His Father. Sure, throughout His walk He did the works the Father showed Him... and did them in oneness with His Father. But Jesus always said the real work He came to do was to die (John 12:23,27). Jesus knew that His death was where the fruit would come from. What fruit? The fruit of REALLY blessing people with the gift of Eternal Life! In II Corinthians 4:10 Paul said, “Death works in me so Life can work in you”. Paul was serious about blessing others. He was so serious that he chose not just to do things but to die, and to die daily according to 1 Corinthians 15:31.

Well, both Jesus and Paul the doing but in the dying”. does one embrace that “dying” answer to that question is still my heart each day. What the far has melted my heart and keep the Lord so seemingly The Spirit began to share with verses 1-11 about allowing the tical ways. I saw from those low that same mind that was



seemed to agree that “it’s not in But what does that mean? How in practical ways? The Lord’s an-being answered by the Spirit in Lord has shared on that point so opened up “a veil” that used to distant during the busy times. me from Philippians chapter 2 mind of Christ to be in me in prac-verses how I could choose to al-in Christ Jesus when He died on

**The best present we can give our families this Christmas is the Cross at work in hearts towards them!!**