

Ezekiel Part Six

God's View of His Bride in Crisis Part One



The Old Testament Scriptures Speak of Christ Crucified

“Then Jesus said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself”.

Luke 24:25-27

Days after his death, the risen Christ walked along the road to Emmaus with two of his disciples. As they walked and talked together Jesus said something to them that can profoundly affect the way we approach the Old Testament scriptures. For this study on Ezekiel we can notice how Jesus specifically made mention of the Old Testament prophets. In Luke 24 verses 25 and 26 Jesus told them that the prophets spoke of the Cross in Christ's suffering and entering into glory. As they walked, Jesus Himself opened up the books of Moses and all the prophets showing how they declared Him who has suffered and is risen. Praise God that the Holy Spirit is now sent to open our eyes to see the Cross in the Old Testament as well as the New. God's plan from the beginning, before the foundations of the world, was His Lamb slain (Revelation 13:8). All is fulfilled in Him. May we press into every page and every word on it until we find Christ and Him crucified in the scriptures. When we see Him, the Word becomes Life-giving. We can then eat His flesh and drink His blood and become nourished with eternal Life.

Viewing Jerusalem Between Earth and Heaven

Ezek. 8:3a “And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem,”

In Ezekiel 8:3 the Spirit was bringing Ezekiel to God's view of Jerusalem. Throughout the scriptures Jerusalem represents the bride of Christ (Rev. 21:2). Jerusalem was the center and heart of Judah where the temple and the Presence of God dwelt. God wanted Ezekiel to see Jerusalem (the bride) from His view. During Ezekiel's life and ministry, the condition of Jerusalem and the people of Judea were at their all-time lowest. The people had forgotten God days without number and given themselves to idolatry. Jerusalem and the temple were being plundered and destroyed while the people were being exiled to Babylon. If there ever was a time for a spirit of criticalness and condemnation towards God's people to flourish, it would have been during Ezekiel's life. In fact, the rest of the verses in chapter eight define just how defiled the temple had become with the people's idolatry and unfaithfulness. God would eventually cause Ezekiel to look deep within the temple walls and see the great depth of defilement that was occurring within God's own house. But before allowing Ezekiel to look at such things, God went to drastic measures to cause Ezekiel to see His people from His heart.

Help Me To See From Your View!

“And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head,”

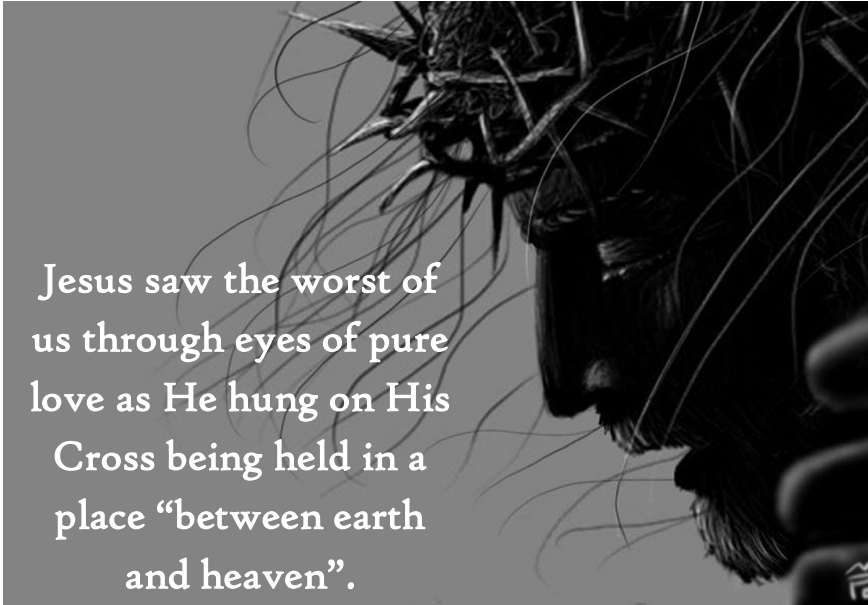
Ezekiel was a man in the midst of an exiled people. He was a priest and a prophet ministering to those who had forsaken the Lord. Certain things would have to be established in Ezekiel to make him a vessel that God could use to minister to these people. Ezekiel would have to rise above the temporal condition of the people and find God's heart. God helped Ezekiel do just this in an amazing way. God reached forth in the form of a hand and grabbed Ezekiel by the hair of his head and pulled him up to see Jerusalem in a certain way. Even Ezekiel (a man of God who was deeply committed to the Lord) needed extra help in seeing things properly. Think about it, God had to drag Ezekiel up to His view by the very hairs of his head! This would not have been necessary if Ezekiel were already seeing things from God's view. Sometimes God needs to shake us out of our view of things and get our attention to what He is really feeling and doing, even if that means forming a hand, grabbing us by the hair and dragging us up with Him. We can become so stuck in the rut of seeing things a certain way that we become trapped in our carnal view. We need to cry out for God to open the eyes of our hearts that we might be lifted up with Him in His view (Eph.1:17).

If we see ourselves and others based only on the truth as it is ‘in the earth’, then we will have a critical and condemning attitude. We will become overwhelmed in the circumstance and lose the strength to “use our wings” and join with the Lord if our way of seeing is only based on the temporal view. Depression, hopelessness and despair begin to overtake us when we base our view on the earth alone. In this earthly position, the basis upon which we judge ourselves and others comes only from our momentary condition and not the finished work of the Cross and our union into Christ.

God’s View is Through the Cross

“and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven”

The next part of verse three declares that, “the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven”. The Holy Spirit grants us spiritual ascendancy to view things in our lives through the vantage point of the Cross and our union into Christ. The Holy Spirit wants to lift our view up from the earth to see things from within Christ. The mystery of this ascendancy of vision is understood only through the Cross of Christ. The specific position that the Spirit lifted Ezekiel into was a picture of Christ on the cross. Ezekiel was lifted up in such a manner that he was suspended between earth and heaven. Hanging in that position, Ezekiel was to look upon Jerusalem in the earth. This is a type and shadow of Christ hanging on His Cross outside the walls of Jerusalem and viewing her and all mankind through eyes of love. The scripture in John 3:14b says, “even so the Son of man must be lifted up” in reference to Jesus’ death on the cross. Jesus was lifted up on tree, and hung there between earth and heaven bearing our sins and iniquities, crucified for and as us. Jesus saw the worst of us through eyes of pure love as He hung on His Cross being held in a place “between earth and heaven”. It is our oneness with Christ crucified that grants us the ability to view ourselves, others and all situations through the eyes of Jesus. Remember, those living creatures in Ezekiel’s visions are full of eyes. They represent believers who have found ascendancy through union with Christ enough to grow wings and fly. One of the reasons they can fly is because they see things through God’s view, for their wings are full of eyes (Ezek. 10:12)!

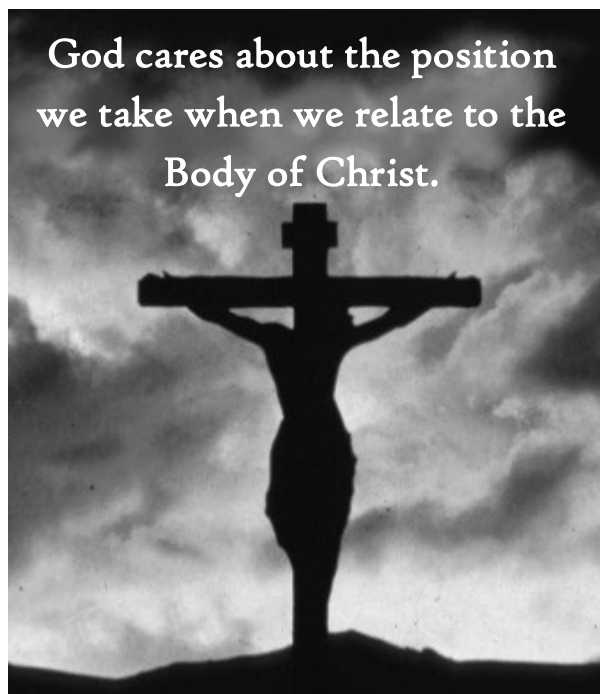


Jesus saw the worst of us through eyes of pure love as He hung on His Cross being held in a place “between earth and heaven”.

When God looks at us, He sees us through the Cross of His Son. When God views our condition, He does so in full view of what His Son accomplished on Calvary for and as us. During Ezekiel's time of ministry, the condition of the people looked desperate and hopeless. For Ezekiel to take God's view and heart position would require him going against what he saw and felt. He had to find the ascendancy through his union into Christ crucified. Despite outward conditions, there is higher ground in Christ that is available to all of us. If we are having a hard time joining with Christ in His view, may we pray for mercy... even if it requires asking God to "take the form of a hand" to grab hold of our attention and draw us upward to see as He sees. Before everything is settled and anyone has changed we can stay one with Jesus on the cross and remain in that union throughout the entire trial, bearing His dying for others (II Cor. 4:10).

Hanging with Hope, Viewing in Love

Notice how the Spirit is interested in Ezekiel's position towards others. Ezekiel's spiritual posture and heart condition was meant to be one with Christ Crucified. Last article we read about Ezekiel laying on his side bearing the sins of the people (Ezek. 4:4-6). This article we find him hung between earth and heaven. Whether its bearing sins on his side, or hanging between earth and heaven, God made Ezekiel a picture to us of someone who carries his cross daily and bears the dying of the Lord Jesus in his body (II Cor. 4:10). God cares about the position we take when we relate to the Body of Christ. God wants us to view the Body of Christ from His broken heart of love. He wants us to see people through crucified eyes. Jesus saw things a certain way when he hung on the Cross, so



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much so that He was able to pray, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Every word Jesus spoke from the Cross came through the lips of a dying man who was pouring out his life for others. God made Ezekiel a prophet, but He also dealt with this man concerning the manner in which he spoke to the people. He wanted him to be a vessel of Christ Crucified, and not just someone who could preach the Cross. Even so, God wants our hearts filled with the love that constrained Christ to die on the Cross for the very people who were rejecting Him. May Christ possess and fill our hearts, eyes, mouths, and every inward part that we may walk as vessels worthy of our calling.