

Ezekiel Part Two

“The Great Divide”

The Contrast

The contrast between what is true in the risen Christ and what is manifesting on earth in His Body is clearly laid out in the first chapter of Ezekiel. Ezekiel chapter one paints a powerful picture of “the great divide” between “as it is in heaven” and “as it is in earth” as we encounter a vision of God’s glory and His people in captivity. In this chapter we find a group of defeated captives doomed to serve under a dictator in a foreign land. Yet only a few verses into the first chapter the heavens around them burst open revealing another reality that no one but Ezekiel is able to see. God is enthroned in glory and filling His body with Life. Resurrection reality is filling the heavens while the earth is yet in darkness and unformed. To God’s people in captivity, their only reality is their past failures and future fate of doom and gloom in Babylon. Every tear, hopeless sigh and weary heart is completely unaware of God’s reality, how God sees them, and His purpose for their future in His Son. Hardness and rebellion has settled into many of them. The idea of being God’s habitation has died in their hearts and an empty life of silent wasting away is causing this dullness and even hardness. Something dies in a person who has lost hope. They no longer even look up to see something in God that is higher than their own desperate condition.

Ezekiel as a Type of the Holy Spirit

In many ways the book of Ezekiel represents the work of the Holy Spirit to the Body of Christ. The scriptures declare that the Holy Spirit was sent down from the right hand of Majesty on high after Christ rose and was ascended in glory with us in Him (Jn. 14:26, Jn. 15:1-15). The Spirit is sent from this heavenly realm of victory and completion in Christ to the Body of the risen Son who oftentimes

identifies and functions more as “captives in the earth” than members of the risen Christ. He is sent to awaken them to who they are in Christ. He is sent to build and form them according to the Son Who is now their very Life. You can see the Holy Spirit has a big job in dealing with us! Rather than enjoying heavenly bliss in spiritual realms in God,... He comes down here and dwells with us in our carnality, chains, and unconformity.

A People Without Hope

Let us now consider Ezekiel’s predicament. He is IMMERSSED into the ‘chains and pains’ of captivity with the people. For five years he has been working side by side with his captive brethren. He was well aware of the condition of the people to whom this vision was coming. He lived with their rebellious attitudes daily, experienced their lack of faith and depression, and saw the hopelessness in their eyes. These devastated captives who had failed God and lost everything were not the most receptive audience to a preacher. To see THEM as those in the glorious vision could have seemed impossible, even for a godly man like Ezekiel. These were a people of broken dreams. Fulfilling their destiny as Zion (the place where God’s Glory dwells), had departed from many of their hearts and minds. For many, their hopes and dreams were simply for God to mend their broken hearts and lives. God’s unveiling of Ezekiel’s eyes to the spiritual reality of the corporate risen Son in glory surely exceeded even man’s most gracious view of the pitiful captives. The captives themselves would have found such a view of themselves as ridiculous. And yet this is just a shadow of how the Church today envisions herself as separate from the risen Son. Although God’s work of forming His Son in us is far from finished, we must learn to view ourselves in Christ. Because of the Cross, we are dead and Christ is now our Life. The Spirit is down here with us to work that reality into our daily walk as Christ is formed in us. Yet before anything manifests through us in the earth, we must look up and see who we are in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. From that place of utter acceptance and love, we can allow God to deal with us and bring to bear in our walk the deep in-working of His Cross.

Impossible ?

“And when I saw it, I fell upon my face..” (Ezekiel 1:28).

Ezekiel's reaction to God opening the heavens was to “fall on his face” (vs. 28). Isn't that what we all do when we see the contrast between the glory of the Risen Son Who is supposed to be our Life, and what our lives look like in manifestation down here on the earth? It is overwhelming, depressing, and makes some want to quit and confess defeat. Some may have thoughts such as, “There is no way I will ever be able to have that kind of Glory at work in my pitiful life. I am a captive to my marriage, my broken relationships, my boss at work, my fears and phobias, etc. Yes, it is fun to go to church on Sundays and hear about a great and glorious God Who lives on a throne far above the earth and loves me. But do not require of me to bring His Glory down into my captivity, because that seems completely impossible. In Ezekiel's vision in chapter one I find heavenly beings described as connected into God's throne that have LIFE, are filled with vision, and move as one. I feel dead on the inside at times, devoid of Christ's forgiveness, compassions and self-sacrifice. My eyes do not see the Lamb in my practical, everyday circumstances... I just see the same old injustices day after day, year after year, hardening my heart in more and more unbelief. And I cannot move as one with the people in my local fellowship because they have hurt my feelings and don't see things the way I do. That vision is a far away dream reserved for when I die and go to heaven, because it is IMPOSSIBLE for it to become real in my practical daily walk”. A Judean during the time of Ezekiel may have entertained thoughts such as these, “Why would God share such a thing with us? We have no resources left to respond to such a vision, for we are completely emptied and desolate. We have no temple, no priest, and no homeland. We are a scattered and scarred people. Such visions belong to the strong and victorious. We have been separated unto the portion of the defeated, a shameful exile in Babylon. Our heads hang down, our knees are weak, and we have no strength to pursue such dreams anymore. Our hopes are shattered; our fears have become our reality. What is left for us now but to settle for a life of captivity in a foreign land, far away from the dreams and destiny of Zion?” What we must remember and embrace during such

times of fear and doubt is that the Holy Spirit is here among us and in us because it IS IMPOSSIBLE for us to manifest the glory of the heavenly vision. It will require the Life of Christ formed in us, and that is the work of God.

God's Response

“And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. 2 And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me” (Ezekiel 2:1).

In Chapter 2 and verse 1 God responds to the fallen down Ezekiel who is lying on his face, overwhelmed with the vision. God says, “Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.” God is a good Father, and He knows how to deal with His sons and daughters. God says, GET UP! He does not allow us to lie in a state of overwhelmed-ness, un-belief, or self-pity. God did not show Ezekiel these marvelous heavenly realities to simply teach him a doctrinal truth about God's throne. I believe that whatever God shares with us in His Word, by His Spirit, and from His heart; He is sharing with us because He plans to experientially bring us into the fullness of it by Christ. God is not teaching and training Pharisees, He is preparing branches to be filled with the Life of the True Vine they have been joined to. So God says, ‘Get up son of man and stand on your FEET, because all this glory relates to you in your walk’. As it is in the heavenlies of the Risen Son, so will it be in His members on earth. Trust in God and begin to open yourself to Him.

Understanding the “In Christ” Realm

In Christ is not a far-away vision seen on cloudless days when God chooses to open the heavens. In Christ is where we were when Jesus was crucified on a tree. In Christ is where we were when He was buried with the transgressors and left for dead. In Christ is where we were when He rose from the dead and ascended on high. In Christ is where we are when we sit weeping over the captivity we are experiencing in our walk. God's supreme reality surrounds us in the Spirit, even when our eyes are completely blind to it. His Son has died for us and as us. We

are dead. Our Life is now hid with Christ in God. In captivity we are meant to experience in our walk what in “Jerusalem” was religious routine. Here, by the river Chebar in chains, an open heaven revealing the risen Son Who is our Life is like the Dayspring from on high shining into us the hope of fresh new Life, Christ flowing in us again. Yes, unbelief can assault our minds as we view the huge difference between resurrection reality and earth manifestations. But God is opening His heavens to lift our hearts up into a faith that will open the door allowing Him to eventually turn our captivity. Ezekiel’s reaction to the vision was to fall on his face. Remember, he was immersed in the ugly reality of Judah’s condition at that moment in time. They were a mess. Things were bad and only getting worse. To see this vision and stand up in faith and hope was beyond him at this point. And that is why God had to step in and say, “Stand up, son.” I need you to receive what I am showing you with an open heart and not a doubting mind.

HOPE

In Chapter 2 verse 2 we find the earnest of God’s intent in all that is to come in this book, “And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me”. God’s spirit is going to FILL the Body of His resurrection. God’s Life is going to raise us up to our feet and set us in “walking position”. God’s Spirit is going to breath the Life of His words into our ears and hearts that we might hear what the Spirit is trying to say concerning our Life-union with the Risen Son. It is our part to simply turn from our position of defeat and despair, and look unto God and listen to what He is saying concerning the truth as it is in Jesus, our Life. This is our first step in turning away from ourselves unto God. The Spirit comes to us in our pity-party and woos our hearts to look away from our life in the earth to behold our true Life in the risen Son.

Look Up and Get Up

Yes, only God can translate an open heavens vision of the Lamb in glory into a practical reality applied in our everyday walk. But God will not move apart from our FAITH. The first five words of Ezekiel are “NOW IT CAME TO PASS”. We must not lay down in the failures of the past. We must not faint under the chastisement of the present. We MUST get up in “NOW FAITH” according to the reality of our oneness in the risen Son. It was time for the captives to turn their focus away from the mess they made in Jerusalem. It was time for the captives to turn their hearts away from obsessing on their afflictions in the earth. God was and is declaring that NOW it is time to lift up the eyes and receive a NEW identity in the Risen Son. If we choose to identity in Him above it all, then the Holy Spirit will begin to move in a way to conform us in our walk according to our true identity in the risen Son. Once again, all God requires is our FAITH. Faith makes us stand up in belief whereas fear and regret make us fall down in unbelief and depression. If God truly rose us UP and seated us together in heavenly places in Christ (Eph. 2:6), then it is our part to abide in Him by faith. It is God’s part to abide in us through His indwelling Son (Jn 15:4).

Stop Crying and Get Up

When the Babylonians destroyed the temple in Jerusalem, it was during the tenth year of Ezekiel’s captivity. Everything but the western wall of the temple fell. That was literally over a thousand years ago. Yet still today they are Jews who weep and wail over that portion of the temple wall waiting for the Glory to return. They need to let that temple fall in their hearts, and lift up their eyes to the True Temple which is Christ in resurrection with us in Him. The old temple had to be destroyed so that God could raise up the true Temple in Himself through His Cross (Jn. 2:19). Why weep and wail over something God has rejected? Let the Cross do its work and bring down everything that is not Christ Himself filling us? I believe Isaiah says this beautifully in chapter 30, verses 19-25 *“For the people who dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee. And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see*

thy teachers: And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence. Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures. The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the ground shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan. And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.” The day Jesus died on the Cross with us in Him is “the day of the great slaughter”, and that is the day the “tower fell” and the old temple / the old man was crucified. Rather than weeping over God’s rejection and judgment on the flesh, we should rejoice that God has and will raise us up in the New, His Son. This applies to every defeated area of our lives; ruined relationships, hopeless struggles with our wretched flesh, and circumstance that crush us. Only the Cross can and has brought all that down into death. May we cry out to SEE AND KNOW the reality of the Cross, rather than weeping and wailing over old things that were never the Son God was looking for. ***

To be continued...