

<They Turned Not as They Went>

Ezekiel Chapters Ten and Eleven

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~ Our Spiritual Safari is literally trafficking in supernatural phenomenon as we continue this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God. There are very few places in Scripture where God pulls the curtain back so openly to show us the spiritual workings of Heaven. If you have been with us in our previous seven reports from Ezekiel, and if you have prayed that God will reveal the matter He is speaking of to us through his prophet, then you will know we are dealing with some of the deepest, heaviest truths in the entirety of life. Israel is experiencing unspeakable tragedies at this time in which we are studying; because they refused the mercy and redemption that God Almighty had for them. When we consider that God's grace is still evident – even in His judgments – and that His judgments are the revelation whereby we know He is God – then these axioms of Scripture become altogether frightening – even terrifying.

We are currently examining a series of visions Ezekiel had; which began in chapter eight and continues through chapter twenty-four – and they all have one general theme: that Jehovah is justified in destroying the land of Israel and sending His chosen people into captivity because of their disobedience. Most of these visions rest largely on the vision Ezekiel had in chapter one: the vision of the glory of the Lord. I recognize my inability to convey the full meaning of Ezekiel's first vision – and I readily admit to that fact in those reports; but, frankly, I doubt anyone can grasp the entirety of its denotation. Ezekiel is touching on the infinite in what God showed him.

In our last report, we saw Ezekiel taken-up supernaturally in a type of rapture from Babylon back to the city of Jerusalem and, specifically, into the temple of days gone by. There, he saw the abominations that the children of Israel had committed throughout their history; and he was subsequently permitted to go back to Babylon and report to his fellow captives who were being misled by the false prophets. Remember, the false prophets were still insisting that, "... everything is fine. We'll be going home soon. Isaiah was wrong. Jeremiah was, in fact, the false prophet - and

Ezekiel is a weirdo who has no earthly idea what he is talking about.” Well, Ezekiel is now giving them firsthand information — straight from God Almighty as to why He was permitting the land of Israel to be decimated, Jerusalem to be destroyed, the people taken into slavery and Solomon’s Temple to be crushed and burned. The rest is ancient history.

Judgment comes upon sin, friends; even for God’s chosen people. Be not deceived, God is not mocked; whatsoever a man shall sow, that shall he also reap. There was more than justification for God to allow what was happening to happen. The judgment of God is undeniable evidence that God is Who He says He is. God certainly moves in the affairs of His children – and in the affairs of men, in general. You’re not going to proclaim a faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and get by with your sins. It’s not going to happen. The wheels within wheels represent the unstoppable energy of God as He moves in justice and righteousness.

As we read on, we see the glory of God that was above the cherubims in the Holy of Holies. The nation Israel had something that no other nation has ever had – and something that the church does not have today: the visible presence of God in the Shekinah Glory! God was physically present in the tabernacle and, later, in the temple. Now, the glory of the Lord is beginning to move out of the temple. In our last report, we saw the visible presence of the Lord move up from between the cherubims and begin to hover above the temple proper itself. And these are the same things Ezekiel saw in chapter one, by the way....

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1 Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne.

2 And he spake unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, even under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubims, and scatter them over the city. And he went in in my sight.

~ We saw coals on the altar in Isaiah; and coals speak of judgment in Scripture. The children of Israel had refused the grace of God, rejected His mercy and polluted His redemption – even though He had been gracious to them for centuries by this time in which we are studying. So, now they must bear His judgment. These people were religious to their fingertips; but they refused to do things God’s way. They were absolutely hell-bent on doing it *THEIR* way. Well, Christ bore our judgment on the cross. When we add anything to that in connection with salvation, judgment comes. It’s really that simple; and, yet, it’s just that complicated.

None of us are sweet little boys or girls, friends. We have nothing to offer God for our salvation – and we can do nothing except trust Him to be saved or to *KEEP* us saved, either. Salvation is not some sterile contract whereby Jesus says, “*if you do A, B and C I’ll keep you around.*” No, it’s a little deeper than that – as deep as His love for us. Those who don’t really love the Lord Jesus, yet become religious, will always begin working for their salvation *and* working to remain saved; and that’s when they *ALWAYS* fall into the liturgical trap that resulted in Israel being taken away into Babylonian captivity.

I don’t know why so many Christians believe they become morally superior people after they are saved. The best we can ever say is that we are sinners saved by grace. Many denominations today *HATE* that axiom of truth, of course; because it exposes their false teachings. They pervert sound doctrine by espousing it to be an excuse to sin. Well, if you’re saved, then you’re a saved sinner. What no one likes to acknowledge is our beginning. Judgment has come upon the entire land of Israel at the time in which we are studying – and God isn’t making any apologies for it. Israel is the center of the earth; God called Israel the “*... naval of the world.*”

Jerusalem will be the capital of the Millennial Kingdom. Jerusalem is the single-most sensitive slice of real estate on the face of the earth – always has been – and always will be. That region is Palestine – whether you accept the designated name or not – and it became the nerve center of the world during the days of Abraham. Later, Palestine became the center of truth and wisdom – because of Moses’ faith, and that of the prophets. Ultimately, Palestine became the salvation-center by the manifestation of

the Lord Jesus Christ. His rejection by His own people led to that land becoming the center of world conflict – and it has remained that way for more than twenty centuries now. One day, Jerusalem will become the peace center – and the center of the glory of God – as Holy Writ flows from it like a pure stream of Living Water in a renewed world that has been placed in a new universe that mankind has yet to experience; but that's a lesson for another report....

3 Now the cherubims stood on the right side of the house, when the man went in; and the cloud filled the inner court.

4 Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD'S glory.

5 And the sound of the cherubims' wings was heard even to the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh.

6 And it came to pass, that when he had commanded the man clothed with linen, saying, Take fire from between the wheels, from between the cherubims; then he went in, and stood beside the wheels.

7 And one cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubims unto the fire that was between the cherubims, and took thereof, and put it into the hands of him that was clothed with linen: who took it, and went out.

8 And there appeared in the cherubims the form of a man's hand under their wings.

~ So, what we are seeing in Ezekiel's message, and through his eyes, is the departure of the visible glory and presence of God from the temple; and, as I have previously stated, I believe I can sustain that that departure happened during the fifty-five year reign of Manasseh. From this passage, it seems clear to me that the Shekinah Glory hovered over the temple for some period of time to see if the people would turn back to Him. Of course, they didn't. Even so, it is still important to remember that God has an

eternal plan and purpose in Jerusalem. We also have this “hand” again; which denotes the ceaseless activity and constant work of the Lord dispensing revelation. Our logical conclusion is that God is performing His judgment and redemptive love simultaneously. That’s utterly bitter medicine for the unsaved man; but blessed assurance in comfort for children of God. Well, Isaiah said, “... *who hath believed my report?*” Frankly, I ask the same question as I type this report and as you read it, my dear readers....

9 And when I looked, behold the four wheels by the cherubims, one wheel by one cherub, and another wheel by another cherub: and the appearance of the wheels was as the colour of a beryl stone.

10 And as for their appearances, they four had one likeness, as if a wheel had been in the midst of a wheel.

11 When they went, they went upon their four sides; they turned not as they went, but to the place whither the head looked they followed it; they turned not as they went.

12 And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were full of eyes round about, even the wheels that they four had.

13 As for the wheels, it was cried unto them in my hearing, O wheel.

~ God never detours in the accomplishment of His plan and purpose in this world, friends. He never deviates from the chart He has plotted. God doesn’t turn from one side to another. He doesn’t have to swerve to miss something in the middle of the road. God never has to drop back and clarify, or amend, or add something He forgot. He moves forward in His glory; paving His Own path, and He doesn’t even seem to look back, as far as I can tell from Ezekiel’s writing. That’s the vision the prophet is giving us in this section of Scripture. Interestingly, when we look at a spinning wheel, it can appear to be moving backwards – but, of course, it isn’t. When this realization was all dispensed at one time, it was too much for this prophet; and he could only cry out, “*oh, wheels!*” ~

14 And every one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.

~ Of course, this is all highly-figurative language; and, while I wouldn't want to press the issue too dogmatically, I think we have the four Gospels represented in the four beasts of Ezekiel. We saw this in our safari reports from chapter one of this prophecy; and we'll see it again in the Book of Revelation. The face of an eagle speaks of the deity of Christ; as presented in the Gospel of John. The face of a lion speaks of Christ as the lion of Judah – the king – as He is presented in the Gospel of Matthew. The face of a man speaks of Christ as a human being; as He is presented in the Gospel of Luke. The difference here is: the face of the ox has been replaced with the face of the cherub! That speaks of John-Mark. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is the servant who shed His Blood on the cross that you and I might not perish, but have everlasting life. The cherub looked down on, and over, the blood in the tabernacle sprinkled on the Mercy Seat. Information is power; and this information is critical to the sincere student of Scripture....

15 And the cherubims were lifted up. This is the living creature that I saw by the river of Chebar.

16 And when the cherubims went, the wheels went by them: and when the cherubims lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the same wheels also turned not from beside them.

17 When they stood, these stood; and when they were lifted up, these lifted up themselves also: for the spirit of the living creature was in them.

18 Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims.

19 And the cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight: when they went out, the wheels also were beside them,

and every one stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD'S house; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above.

20 This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar; and I knew that they were the cherubims.

21 Every one had four faces apiece, and every one four wings; and the likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings.

22 And the likeness of their faces was the same faces which I saw by the river of Chebar, their appearances and themselves: they went every one straight forward.

XI

1 Moreover the spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of the LORD'S house, which looketh eastward: and behold at the door of the gate five and twenty men; among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people.

2 Then said he unto me, Son of man, these are the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city:

3 Which say, It is not near; let us build houses: this city is the caldron, and we be the flesh.

~ The prophecy in chapter eleven of Ezekiel is a pronouncement of judgement specifically against the religious rulers in Jerusalem. The layout of Ezekiel is not completely chronological in form; and, at the time in which we are studying, it seems that most of the Jews are now in Babylonian captivity, but the city and temple still have yet to be destroyed. It would seem we are oscillating in the history of Israel. This passage seems to indicate the time when Zedekiah was still on the throne. Because the timing is unclear, my interpretation is that time no longer matters in judgment.

What we know for sure is that Israel was in rebellion towards God and against King Nebuchadnezzar at this time. The children of Israel formed a

perverted perspective of their occupancy of the land. Those remaining in Jerusalem rather enjoyed all of their brethren being taken away. They thought mass deportations would bring them peace, plenty, and that prosperity was inevitable; but their thinking was actually a criminal mindset. Think of it as if your neighbor was taken away, and wasn't coming back, so you helped yourself to all of their stuff. It's materialism in its most degenerate form. That's exactly what was happening at this time....

4 Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man.

5 And the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the LORD; Thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them.

~ There is no such thing as a right-to-privacy with God. He knows what we are thinking at all times, and He knows what we are going to say before we even form the words on our tongue. These people had killed those who stood for God; and others were being carried away as captives – which was just fine with those who remained. So, God said He is going to judge them, too. Well, even in the midst of His fury, God gives them a ray of hope beginning in verse sixteen of this chapter. The Lord is going to preserve a remnant and He is going to be their temple and sanctuary. That's quite a promise.

God is still allowing Himself to remain approachable for the sincere and obedient man who seeks to honestly trust Him. This is God's arrangement for His chosen people during the time in which the city of Jerusalem was destroyed, the land of Israel was decimated, the Jews were either killed or taken away to Babylon as slaves, and Solomon's Temple was pillaged, crushed and burned. See, the judgment of God is coming, friends; and for the modern ministry to ignore that fact is a *HUGE* mistake. They are false teachers who perform a profound disservice to their congregation.....

6 Ye have multiplied your slain in this city, and ye have filled the streets thereof with the slain.

7 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Your slain whom ye have laid in the midst of it, they are the flesh, and this city is the caldron: but I will bring you forth out of the midst of it.

8 Ye have feared the sword; and I will bring a sword upon you, saith the Lord GOD.

9 And I will bring you out of the midst thereof, and deliver you into the hands of strangers, and will execute judgments among you.

10 Ye shall fall by the sword; I will judge you in the border of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

11 This city shall not be your caldron, neither shall ye be the flesh in the midst thereof; but I will judge you in the border of Israel:

12 And ye shall know that I am the LORD: for ye have not walked in my statutes, neither executed my judgments, but have done after the manners of the heathen that are round about you.

13 And it came to pass, when I prophesied, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then fell I down upon my face, and cried with a loud voice, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?

14 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

15 Son of man, thy brethren, even thy brethren, the men of thy kindred, and all the house of Israel wholly, are they unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, Get you far from the LORD: unto us is this land given in possession.

16 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; 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.

17 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.

18 And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence.

19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:

20 That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

21 But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord GOD.

22 Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above.

23 And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.

~ So, we end this leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God with another movement of the Shekinah Glory. The Spirit of God moves on from hovering over the temple to the Mount of Olives. That's east of the city. We also end with Ezekiel right back where he began – with the captives down by the river. Ezekiel is going to call attention – again – to the lies of the false prophets who were saying he was a false prophet. This prophecy of the Bible is more up-to-date than tomorrow morning's headlines, friends. The children of Israel will still refuse to listen to Ezekiel; and, today, the true man of God is simply not going to be listened to, either. Join us in our next report, if you are able....

24 Afterwards the spirit took me up, and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the captivity. So the vision that I had seen went up from me.

25 Then I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that the LORD had shewed me ~

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My friend, I stand in judgment now
~ And feel that you're to blame somehow
On earth I walked with you by day
~ But you never pointed me in the right way
You knew the Lord in His truth and glory
~ But you never told me the complete story
My knowledge was so very dim
~ You could have led me safely to Him
Though we lived together there on earth
~ You never told me of the second birth
Now I stand this day condemned
~ Because you failed to mention Him
You taught me many things, that's true
~ And I called you my friend and trusted you
Now I've learned that it's just too late
~ You failed to keep me from this fate
We walked by day and talked by night
~ But you never revealed to me the light
You let me live, laugh, love and die
~ Not caring that I would never live on high
Yes, I called you my friend in life
~ And trusted you through joy and strife
Yet coming to this dreadful end
~ I cannot now call you friend

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