

EZEKIEL: BLOSSOMING DURING LIFE'S MOST SEVERE CRISES

Part XXII: God's Desire And Ability To Revive His Relationship With Very Estranged People (Ezekiel 40:1-43:12)

I. Introduction

- A. It is one thing to inform a sinner about his gaining forgiveness from God. It is quite another thing to disciple one who is very estranged from God so that he can be **comfortable** with God!
- B. Ezekiel 40-48 gives an incredible encouragement to defeated captives in Babylon on God's power to clean up the enormous breach of rapport between His sinful people and Himself.

II. God's Ability To Revive His Relationship With His Estranged People, Ez. 40:1-43:12:

- A. When God first appeared to Ezekiel in Ez. 1:3, He revealed His glory to show sovereignty over Israel in its discipline in Babylonian Captivity.
- B. Because of Israel's gross sins in the temple complex, the glory of the Lord was seen in the spirit departing from the temple toward the east to reside temporarily on the Mount of Olives, Ez. 10:19.
- C. However, God reversed this departure from fellowship with His people in a vision of Israel's future:
 1. Fourteen years after the Babylonian Captivity began, God gave Ezekiel a vision of the coming grandeur of the Messianic Temple, Ez. 40:1-4, 5-42:20.
 2. In this vision, God reversed His journey away from the temple complex toward the Mount of Olives, returning from the east to enter the cleansed temple, Ez. 43:1-2.
 3. The glory of the Lord was the same expression of glory that Ezekiel had seen in Ez. 1:3, Ez. 43:3b. However, it was in a completely reversed context:
 - a. In Ezekiel 1:3, the vision of God was given in the context of Ezekiel's predicting the fall of Jerusalem due to its sin!
 - b. In Ezekiel 43:3a,b, this same glory that had been expressed in the context of destruction is now expressed in another context -- that of restoration of a new temple.
 - c. Since Ezekiel viewed this same glory reversing its departing steps, he immediately appreciated the theme of **divine reconciliation** in Ez. 43:3c, and worshipped by falling on his face, Ez. 43:3c!
 - d. As he did this, the glory of the Lord entered the Messianic Temple, the hope of every Jew, 43:4.
 4. God then allowed Ezekiel to see His glory displayed in the inner sanctuary of the temple, implying that in the Millennial Kingdom, the glory of God would be fully restored to Israel's temple, Ez. 43:5.
- D. With this object lesson came a verbal lesson from the Lord, Ez. 43:6-12:
 1. In stark contrast to the departure of God's glory and presence from the temple, God promised to dwell in the midst of His people in this Messianic Temple, Ez. 43:6-7a.
 2. However, the former desecrations of God's Name and temple by false worship and the use of the temple hill as a proud burial lot of king's bodies would no longer occur, Ez. 43:7b.
 3. Accordingly, in view of this marvelous, sanctified future for Israel, God urged Ezekiel to order the nation to start acting out this holiness now that they were in captivity, Ez. 43:8-9.
 4. Ezekiel was to show the glory of this new temple that he viewed in his vision as a motivation to shame the nation from its past sins to live a godly lifestyle, Ez. 43:10-12.

Lesson: *God has the ability and the purpose completely to reconcile very estranged sinners unto Himself so that they can actually enjoy His company.*

Application: *(1) Always take heart in the ability and intent of God to reconcile sinners to Himself. (2) God motivates sinners to repent by (a) giving them insight into the blessings of what happens if they do repent; (b) God also intends to use His good blessings to shame people from wanting ever to sin again and break experiential fellowship with Him, Ez. 43:10ff; (c) by using this "push-pull" motivation, God purposes to motivate carnal believers to make everyday lifestyle changes toward wanting to commune with Him, Ez. 43:8f. (3) If we know a party that views relating to God as a real "downer," take heart! God knows how to motivate them even if we don't! Just keep praying and resting in the Lord regarding him, her or them!*