

## THRU THE BIBLE SYNTHESIS

### "Part XXVIII: Ezekiel - God's Carrying Program When His People Are At Their WORST"

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) On the national scene, America is at a spiritual low:

(a) Don Feder, syndicated columnist wrote an April 6, 1996 editorial in the Waterbury Republican-American that the secular press is intolerant of Christianity. During that week, Time, Newsweek and U.S. News each ran cover stories "seeking to debunk Christianity". He wonders, "Would any of these publications . . . run a cover story questioning the authenticity of **Moses'** message ('Moses, Man or Myth') or dissing **Islam's** founder ('Mohammed -- Charlatan or What?')?"

(b) The President of the United States plans to veto the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Bill, legislation that seeks to prohibit the medical killing of full term babies who are entering the birth canal in the birth process. Dr. Martin Haskell, who has performed over 1,000 partial-birth abortions, claims that "20 percent (of them) are for genetic reasons, and the other 80 percent are **purely elective**," not affecting the mother's welfare at all! In spite of the fact that "71 percent of the American people believe that partial-birth abortions should be illegal" including "65 percent of pro-choice voters, House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt, Minority Whip David Bonior and Representative Patrick Kennedy," the President plans to permit the procedure. (Arianna Huffington, syn. columnist, April 9, '96, Rep.-Am., p. 10A)

(2) However, the same is true **locally** among **Christians**:

(a) In a gospel-preaching church in our area, a minister who believes that salvation is by faith **plus** the sacraments was asked to fill its pulpit in the absence of a pastor. As a result, that errant minister concluded that salvation by faith in Christ **alone** is **NOT** the only way to heaven **or that church would not have let him preach there!** Because of that event, a family left that Church and now attends here!

(b) A member of an Evangelical church in our area that has a sound statement of faith is greatly concerned about the lack of a Biblical stand on an issue that has come up in that church. So far, its leadership has not only failed to take a stand but has even tolerated promotions of the **opposite** by the doctrinally **errant** in the church!

(c) A national, doctrinally solid Evangelical denomination is in leadership crisis **right now** due to its lack of taking solid stands!

**What happens when even God's people are at their worst?!**

***Need: "I don't see HOW a given CHRISTIAN party I know will EVER come around to repent! It's absolutely incredible how far the party has gone! What happens NOW? What HOPE is there?!"***

I. **When Israel failed in her mission to counter Nimrodian apostasy, even adopting its error until God judged her by captivity, even IN that CAPTIVITY, she stayed CALLUSED against God's ways!**

- A. Though God created the world and set man up as His deputy, sin deposed him, and Satan became ruler on earth, Gn. 1-5; 2 Cor. 4:4.
- B. The Lord renewed history through the Noahic flood, Gen. 6:1-9:7.
- C. Yet, Noah's descendant, Nimrod, began an apostasy opposing God's rule on earth, Gen. 10:8-10; 11:1-9; Rev. 12:1-3.
- D. God thus chose Abraham to start a nation to check his sin, Gn. 12:1-3.
- E. Yet, after many challenges en route, that nation failed to curb Nimrod's error, and God had to send it into captivity, Gn. 12:4-Jeremiah.
- F. This judgment came in **stages**, so some Hebrews landed in Babylon while the rest remained in Judea with Jeremiah, B.K.C., Q.T., p. 1127.
- G. The Babylonian captives taken in the **early** attacks did **NOT REPENT** as they were **CALLUSED** against recognizing God's truth:
  1. These captives so **doubted** their captivity to be **judgment** that **God** employed a sign: He forced the prophet, Ezekiel to be **unable to SPEAK** and thus **morn** his **wife's death until** Jerusalem **fell** as **proof** to the captives that **God** had **CAUSED** it, Ez. 2:3; 24:15-21!
  2. **Only when Jerusalem ACTUALLY FELL did these captives BELIEVE that Ezekiel's prophecy was TRUE**, Ez. 24:24, 27!

II. **God responded to this CALLOUSNESS by relying upon Himself to "carry" His people during this spiritual low point in their history!**

- A. God raised up Ezekiel among the captives in Babylon to minister to them in their **hardened** state, **supplying** the **grace** for him to **DO so**:
  1. God encouraged Ezekiel that his **God** was sovereign over Babylon:
    - a. In a vision that supplies confidence throughout his ministry, Ezekiel was shown God's glorious supremacy over Babylon: (1) He was shown angelic beings, each looking like various animals normally depicting **Babylon** in reliefs, powerfully being used by **God** to propel His throne around the earth, Ez. 1:4-28b. (2) God revealed that **He** was **still GOD** over **Babylon** though Judeans were captive **there**, for His throne was

**mobile** to go **anywhere** by the powers of **SUBJECT angels** who had powers greater than Babylon! (3)  
Overcome with this insight, Ezekiel fell on his face in worship to His **sovereign** Lord, Ez. 1:28c.

2. God then commanded Ezekiel to call the **CALLUSED** captives to repent, **equipping** him to be **strong** in doing so, Ez. 2:1-2, 3-3:27.
  - a. The Holy Spirit empowered Ezekiel for his service, Ez. 2:3a.
  - b. As encouragement, God told Ezekiel that, in the end, the captives would realize that God had sent him to them, Ez. 2:5.
  - c. To offset being manipulated by his opponents, God pledged to **force** Ezekiel either to speak or to be silent at the right times so he would always do what was **right** in his ministry, Ez. 3:9-27.
- B. God thus "carried" this **man** so he could "carry" the **captives** through their rebellion and on into renewal **once they came to their senses**:
  1. Until Jerusalem really **fell**, Ezekiel ministered at great personal cost to warn the unbelieving captives that it **would** fall, Ez. 4:1-24:27.
  2. **When** Jerusalem actually **fell**, Ezekiel's work **instantly changed** to **EDIFY** the captives who were **shocked** to see he told the **truth**:
    - a. God had him prophesy judgment against the Gentile nations that abusively treated Jerusalem in its sacking, Ez. 25:1-32:32.
    - b. God had him prophecy of Israel's restoration, Ez. 33:33-39:29.
    - c. Finally, God gave encouraging predictions for Ezekiel to share regarding Israel's **Messianic** temple, worship and land to **offset** the shock of the **current** temple's fall, Ez. 40:1-48:35!

III. **Ezekiel's contribution to the "thread of redemption" is news that following Jerusalem's fall under apostate Davidic kings, she would NOT be ruled by Davidic kings until MESSIAH came, 21:26-27! God's UNCONDITIONAL Davidic Covenant WOULD be fulfilled in GRACE as GOD carried David's rebellious line along in history until the RIGHTEOUS Messiah in that line arrived to rule!**

***Application:** Recalling that man makes it to blessing by God's grace ALONE, (1) believe on Christ for salvation from sin to be saved by grace apart from merit, Ep. 2:8-9; Jn. 3:16. (2) As a believer, do NOT rely upon our own "goodness" or that of others for blessing, but cleave to GOD'S unconditional promises to HIMSELF regarding all believers, and keep living by grace through faith in HIM ALONE! God will take responsibility to equip leaders and His people to survive!*

***Lesson:** Were it up to their own "goodness", God's people would NEVER make it! However, God's promises to HIMSELF regarding their ultimate end CARRY them by CARRYING their LEADERS in their LOW points!*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the lesson . . .)

We have encouraging evidence that God is at work to carry us at this time in Church History. Consider the following:

(1) After his opening comments in an editorial displaying the secular media's "War against Christians" mentioned in our sermon introduction, syndicated **secular** columnist, Don Feder concludes with this heartwarming conviction: "For people of good will who are willing to man the barricades, a new book by Dr. D. James Kennedy ('The Gates of Hell Shall Not Prevail: The Attack on Christianity and What You Need to Know to Combat It') is highly recommended." **As a columnist in a secular news media realm, Don Feder actually promotes the Evangelical's right to be defended!**

(2) Mona Charen, another **secular** syndicated columnist, wrote in the same paper a few years ago concerned over the increasing effort of mainline Protestant denominations and Catholics to water down their own doctrines to gain "relevance." She complained that, "On the way, they've reinterpreted the Ten Commandments as the Ten Suggestions." She complained, "There will someday be no standards left to repair to when the society at large has tired of license." **In her own way, secular columnist, Mona Charen, has supported what we are doing at Nepaug by taking doctrinal STANDS!**

(3) Cal Thomas, an Evangelical who also is a **secular** syndicated columnist, this past week took note in the same paper "of the increasing number of people discontented with their lives" and says that, after trying yoga, health food, big government and Eastern religions, people ". . . are exploring angels, a return to church, God and **even Jesus**." He summarized: "Could it be that there is a growing awareness of the inability of man to solve his most basic problem? That problem used to be called 'sin' before we absolved ourselves of any fallen nature, preferring the more clinically sounding 'dysfunctional' to explain everything from personal moral failures to mass murder . . . Nothing else works, so why not, in the sterling-silver words of the late Tiffany & Co. Chairman Walter Hoving, 'Try God?'" Mr. Thomas concluded: "Maybe . . . we are on the verge of a Great Awakening."

**Again, God is carrying our cause in the secular media by doing preparatory work for the spread of the GOSPEL itself. He is building His Church despite the efforts of the "Gates of Hell"!**