Clips from Psalms
Psalms 104:30-31
Jehovah's care over all his works

"God sends forth his Spirit and man is created; and the Lord renews the face of the ground. Let the glory of Jehovah endure forever; let Jehovah rejoice in his works."

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Ezekiel

The Days of Ezekiel

Judah had lived for years in sin. God saw all that they did and not one thing was hid from his omniscient eyes (Jeremiah 23:23-25). Judah's sin was great. They had allied themselves with Egypt rather than putting their faith and trust in the Lord (2 Kings 18:19-35; Isaiah 30:1-3; 31:1; Jeremiah 2:36-37 and Lamentations 4:17). Judah rejected God's laws (Ezekiel 5:5-6) for the laws of the Gentile nations (Ezekiel 11:12). God's word became so foreign to them that they altogether forgot God (Jeremiah 8:7; Ezekiel 22:12; 23:35). The priest also lost sight of God's word and practiced idolatry (Ezekiel 22:26 and 44:10). The people of Judah sacrificed their sons to Moloch (Jeremiah 16:10-11; 19:5; Ezek. 6:1ff; 8:10; 16:20-21; 22:4 and 23:37). They defiled Jehovah's sanctuary (Ezekiel 5:11; 23:38), were liars (Jeremiah 9:1-3), deceitful (Jeremiah 9:4-6), and rebellious (Jeremiah 6:16). Judah's passion was for money (Ezekiel 7:19). They vexed the poor (Ezekiel 22:29) and justice was no where to be found (Jeremiah 21:12).

Jeremiah had warned Judah of their sins for 23 years yet they ignored him (Jeremiah 25:1-3) and said of God's word, "we will not walk therein" (Jeremiah 6:16). The Lord decreed seventy years of Babylonian captivity for his people so that they would come to know that he is the Lord (Jeremiah 25:11). Babylon would be God's battle axe used against his own people for their wickedness.
Welcome to all Our Visitors. It is our prayer that you will be edified by our worship service today. If you have any questions regarding what we teach or practice please be our friend and talk with us. The Robertson's are on Vacation. Be sure to listen to the announcements for current conditions of our members.

If you have never obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ we pray that you will consider your soul this day. You must hear the gospel preached (Romans 10:17). You must believe the gospel message (Hebrews 11:6). You must confess that Jesus is the Christ (Romans 10:9). You must acknowledge and repent of sins committed (Luke 13:3).

You must be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38). You must remain faithful all the days of your life (Revelation 2:10).

The Lord unfolds his objective for Judah's repentance through the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar first conquers Judah in 565 BC making Jehoiakim a vassal king. He carried away much of the temple's treasures and many Jewish youths, including Daniel (see 2 Kings 24:1; 2 Chronicles 36:6ff). Jeremiah's prophetic proclamation of Judah spending 70 years in Babylonian captivity began at this point (see Jeremiah 25:8ff). Over the next twenty years, Judah would live in subjection to Babylon with two more major attacks and deportation of its citizens at 555 BC and 544 BC. The second attack of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar resulted in 10,000 people being deported as captives to Babylon among whom was Ezekiel (see Ezekiel 1:1-2 and 2 Kings 24:13-14). The final attack decimated Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem for one and a half years. The people died gruesome deaths of sword, pestilence, and starvation. They destroyed the temple of Jehovah and burned the entire city with its walls down to the ground (2 Kings 25:8-12). Babylon had done their God ordained work yet remained subject to the same wrath of God that they released upon Judah (Jeremiah 6:6).

God remained in control even though Judah is completely decimated. Jeremiah continued to do his prophetic work in Judah with the residue of Jews left by Nebuchadnezzar. Ezekiel was God's prophet to the Jewish captives in Babylon and Daniel worked with the kings and princes of Babylon.

Ezekiel the Man

Ezekiel was twenty five years old when he was deported with the others to Babylon (Ezekiel 1:1-2). The name Ezekiel means "God will strengthen." The prophet's name fits his work of encouraging the captives of Babylon. Ezekiel lived on the banks of the Chebar River at a city called Telabib as a prisoner of war (Ezekiel 3:15). He was married yet we are not told if he had children (Ezekiel 24:15-18). God calls upon Ezekiel to do his work among the captives in Babylon (see Ezekiel 3:11). Five years after his deportation to Babylon (592 BC), God appears to Ezekiel at the river Chebar and calls him to the office of prophet being thirty years old (Ezekiel 1:1). Ezekiel had many identities. First, he is referred to as a "son of man" ninety three times in the book of Ezekiel. The meaning of this term is somewhat obscure but appears to be used in connection with Ezekiel's work as a prophet (see Ezekiel 2:1-5). Secondly, Ezekiel was a "priest" of God (Ezekiel 1:2). Thirdly, Ezekiel is identified as a "watchman over the house of Israel" (Ezekiel 3:17 and 33 all). Fourthly, Ezekiel is identified as a prophet of parables (see Ezekiel 17:2 and 24:3-5).

A distinguishing characteristic of Ezekiel was that he always did what he was commanded to do. The Lord gave his prophet some incredibly hard and heart wrenching tasks yet Ezekiel faithfully performed God's will. The Lord had told Ezekiel that he would serve as a sign to the rebellious house of Israel. God would take the life of the prophet's wife to prove the validity of his claim. Ezekiel is told not to mourn her death and the scriptures tell us that he did as he was commanded (see Ezekiel 24:15-18). On another occasion the prophet is told to lie on his left side for 390 days to bear the sins of Israel (Ezekiel 4:4-5). Immediately afterwards, the prophet is to lay on his right side for forty days signifying a bearing of Judah's sins (see Ezekiel 4:6-7). Ezekiel does so without complaint. Ezekiel is told to prophesy about a valley full of dead man's bones and scriptures tell us that he did as he was commanded (Ezekiel 37:7). Ezekiel did as God commanded also when the Lord told him to remove his belongings at his house and dig through the city walls signifying the manner in which the captives would make their way to Babylon (Ezekiel 12:1-7). Ezekiel faithfully performed all that God commanded though the tasks were difficult for his personal well being.

Continued Next Week

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