

FEASTING ON THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

Faithful in Times of Upheaval

Ezekiel

INTRODUCTION: Welcome! New ones. Welcome back!

Still glad to have those worshipping online with us. Some who sat here last week are back online this week. Setback – Bay County. Cases up, hospitals up – hence, the masks! We have had some in our congregation to get COVID, none were in worship services when sick as best we know. However, we did have a student at Wednesday Rush Hour who was sick the next day and has tested positive for COVID. We have notified everyone he was close to and advised quarantine. We let all the youth parents know what happened. Bro. Mark was exposed so he will be in quarantine for 14 days.

Moving Forward! Next Sunday – services 9 - Choir led; 10:30 - Band led.

Folks, setbacks cause us to need reminders of the faithfulness of God. There is no shortage of testimony in Scripture. Today I want to tell you of God's faithfulness to a man whose name you know, but many do not know his story.

Intro on Ezekiel

Like Jeremiah, Ezekiel was both a priest and a prophet.

Nebuchadnezzar subdued Judah and Jerusalem in three stages.

- **In 605 B.C. – aristocracy, Daniel and his friends**
- **In 597 B.C. – rebellion, 10,000 hostages, Ezekiel**
- **586 B.C. – Jerusalem destroyed. Ezekiel's wife died.** (Upheaval devastating to all Judah, but it was very personal for Ezekiel.)

Ezekiel and Daniel about the same age. Ezekiel mentions Daniel three times, lived in different areas. Daniel's ministry was in the king's court. Ezekiel's ministry was among the exiles.

GOD WAS FAITHFUL TO SHOW EZEKIEL THAT THE LORD REMAINED UPON HIS THRONE!

Ezekiel 1:26–28 NKJV 26 And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. 27 Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. 28 Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.

God sent Ezekiel a vision.

It is hard for language to capture what Ezekiel saw, hence he repeatedly uses the term “likeness.” Or appearance. The glory of the Lord appeared as fire, brightness, brilliant color, glowing and radiating beauty as a rainbow. This glory surrounded the Person above the throne which was above the atmosphere.

The Glory of the Lord was the revealed presence of God.

Even in Babylon, God was there for His people!

Folks, most days when I go home from the church office, I turn on the news, I hope things in our country will look better. They don't! And I am not talking just about COVID-19. I am talking about the godlessness and lawlessness and hatefulness that is seeking to cover our land with darkness!

I don't know if or when these things will get better before the trumpet blows and the archangel shouts and Jesus breaks open the sky and calls His children home.

As the old radio preacher used to say at the beginning of every broadcast, “God's still on His throne, and He still answers prayer!”

Folks, no matter what is happening or what does happen, **God is in control, and God is faithful to take care of His people!**

GOD WAS FAITHFUL FOR HIS SPIRIT TO LIVE INSIDE EZEKIEL.

Ezekiel 2:2 NKJV Then the Spirit entered me when He spoke to me, and set me on my feet; and I heard Him who spoke to me.

Unusual in Ezekiel's day, as it was throughout O.T. – The Holy Spirit came on select individuals for specific periods of time.

At Pentecost, that changed. After Pentecost the Spirit moved into the life of every believer forever!

If you have trusted in Christ, the Holy Spirit lives inside you,

- ever ready to guide you,
- to illumine God's Word to help you understand it,
- to encourage and comfort you,
- to strengthen you and enable you to stand.

Jesus promised us, “I will never leave you or forsake you.” because His Spirit lives inside of us!

GOD WAS FAITHFUL TO SPEAK WORDS TO EZEKIEL THAT WERE TO BE REPEATED TO THE PEOPLE.

Ezekiel 3:10–11 NKJV 10 Moreover He said to me: “Son of man, receive into your heart all My words that I speak to you, and hear with your ears. 11 And go, get to the captives, to the children of your people, and speak to them and tell them, ‘Thus says the Lord God,’ whether they hear, or whether they refuse.”

Note the testimony here of verbal inspiration. God spoke His words to Ezekiel, not just broad or vague ideas that Ezekiel put into words the best he could. This is why in a Study Bible you want as much of a word for word translation of the original as you can get, like the NKJV or the ESV.

But also note that God did not give Ezekiel His Word just for Ezekiel himself.

God told Ezekiel to share it, whether people listened or not. Share the Word!!!

There is a disturbing trend among some believer’s today that if they share what the Word says with an unbeliever that he is somehow violating that person’s space. Thus there is a hesitancy to share the gospel or even to be a witness to a lost man or woman.

Folks, are our social norms above the moral standards of God?

Do we know better than He?

Jesus said, “As the Father has sent Me, so send I you!”

Jesus said, “Go and make disciples,... teaching them...”

Jesus said, “You shall be witnesses to Me!”

God is faithful to give us His word so we can share it with others.

GOD WAS FAITHFUL TO PROVIDE A WATCHMAN ON THE WALL FOR HIS PEOPLE THROUGH THE LIFE OF EZEKIEL.

In fact, because Ezekiel had the Word of the Lord, that which was already revealed before his time in the Scriptures, and that which the Lord was currently revealing to him, God said, “Ezekiel, you are the watchman on the wall.”

Ezekiel 3:17 NKJV “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me:

You have to warn those who do not understand what is really happening.

Ezekiel 33:7–9 NKJV 7 “So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me.

8 When I say to the wicked, ‘O wicked man, you shall surely die!’ and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand.

9 Nevertheless if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.

Folks, we must understand that we have not only a privilege to speak the gospel and the truth of God's Word to an unbelieving world, we have a responsibility!

God holds us accountable for our obedience to His command to go and to tell!

And the day of our accounting will be the day of the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Like Ezekiel, we too are watchmen on the wall!

GOD WAS FAITHFUL TO GIVE HIS PEOPLE HOPE IN A TIME OF GREAT TRIAL.

Ezekiel 37:21–27 NKJV 21 “Then say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land;

Folks, we have seen this in our own lifetime. God is regathering Israel to the land that He promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

22 and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. 23 They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.

But God has only begun to fulfill this promise He spoke to Ezekiel. For right now, for the most part, Israel remains full of lost sinful people, many of whom do not even believe in God and who do not know His Son, their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But one day they will! One day, they will as Zechariah said, “Look on Him whom they pierced, and mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son.”

This happens after Christ returns for the Battle of Armageddon. Those Jews who have survived the Tribulation, will all turn in faith to Christ, and enter His Millennial Kingdom.

24 “David My servant *shall be* king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. 25 Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David *shall be* their prince forever. 26 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. 27 My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

God is faithful to us to set before us a promise for the future that gives us hope.

GOD WAS FAITHFUL TO GIVE EZEKIEL A GLIMPSE OF THE END TIMES.

Ezekiel 47:1–12 NKJV 1 Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east;

the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, ...3 And ... the water came up to my ankles.

4 Again he measured ...; the water came up to my knees. Again he measured ...; the water came up to my waist.

5 Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed.

6 He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?" Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river.

Do you know what the river is? This is the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said in John 7:38–39 NKJV "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; ..."

And look at what happens! Watch the healing power of the Spirit in action!

7 When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and the other.

8 Then he said to me: "This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea.

The sea east of Jerusalem is the Dead Sea. Now watch this, as the Holy Spirit flows to the Dead Sea.

When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed.

9 And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes.

10 It shall be that fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many. ...

Did you hear that, all you fishermen? Here we are in the Millennial Kingdom, and there's all kinds of fish and fishermen!

12 Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine."

CONCLUSION: My friend, this is not just a promise for those of Israel who trust in Christ.

It is for all of us who trust in Christ!

When Israel gets saved we who have trusted Christ now will already be in our resurrection bodies, ruling and reigning with Christ.

We shall be there!

This is our future!

This is our certain hope!

Do not be afraid of the upheavals!