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Seven days of shocked silence

"Then I came to them of the captivity at Telabib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days," Ezekiel 3:15.

This verse was drawn to my attention as my wife and I, as part of our Sabbath Day devotions during the 'lockdown', listened to a sermon on this passage by our son Andy, minister of Penticton Free Presbyterian Church, BC, Canada.

If I may be permitted to recommend the series of expository sermons he preached on the book of Ezekiel, I will most certainly do so. My wife and I have most happily sat and listened to the early messages in the series, and I have to say, learned much. We look forward to working our way through the rest of the 43 messages.

I would especially urge any, who have found this book a little daunting, to listen to the series for they will find that it is a book full, as we might well expect, of the glorious truths of the gospel and many precious revelations of God's purpose in the last days! It is a book most relevant therefore today amidst the perplexing circumstances developing in the world.

Here is the link to the series.

Our text marks the beginning of the ministry of Ezekiel. We are told at the very beginning of the book that Ezekiel, a Levitical priest, "saw visions of God," Ezekiel 1:1.

That was the beginning of his being instructed by the Lord, in preparation for his ministry amongst the 'captives' of Judah in Chaldea or Babylonia.

John the Apostle was the writer of the Book of the Revelation, which may well be called the New Testament parallel to this book of Ezekiel. John was exiled and that on an island in the Mediterranean Sea. Ezekiel likewise was an exile and that by the river of Chebar when God was pleased to begin His purpose in the life of this man, revealing to him "things which must shortly come to pass."

That which was revealed to Ezekiel was a progressively more detailed instruction about the Person, Power and Purpose of God amongst men. I am not going to attempt an exposition of the visions of chapter 1 and 2 of this book, but I would urge upon readers to listen to the series on the book of Ezekiel, the link to which I have supplied above, for in these messages you will find that the visions are not nearly so mystifying as many have made out.

I am coming to the final impact that the first of many visions given to the prophet had upon him. It left him 'astonished', 3:15. The word 'astonished' is a much stronger word than we would today associate 'astonishment' with. The word means 'desolation', (Leviticus 26:22, Lamentations 1:4, 13). It is also translated 'laid waste', (Numbers 12:30). One other example of the meaning of this word is found in Hosea 2:12. There the word is translated as 'destroy'.

These various usages of the word help us to understand just what a traumatic experience of soul, mind and body Ezekiel was passing through, during those seven days of silence. He was struck dumb by that which had been revealed to him, especially the very last item of information conveyed in the revelation he had just received.

That traumatic item of information is contained in the words of verse 12. "Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the LORD from his place."

These words follow on after a very detailed explanation by the Lord of the people to whom the Lord was sending Ezekiel to witness.

"And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that



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spake unto me. And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day. For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them," Ezekiel 2:2-5.

Further descriptions of the wicked rebelliousness of the people are given in the chapter and also just the sort of reception Ezekiel could expect from them.

The prophet is prepared for the work to which God has called him, by firstly receiving the word that he had to deliver to the people.

"Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness," Ezekiel 3:1-3.

Then he is strengthened by the Holy Spirit for the delivering of the message to a hard and defiant people.

"Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house," Ezekiel 3:8-9.

What heaven-sent courage and toughness is required to serve the Lord amidst a people defying the Lord and rejecting His Word!

Prepared

Now, having been thus prepared for his labours, Ezekiel is taken up by the Spirit and he hears behind him "a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the LORD from his place." What he hears is the voice of the LORD on the move! It is a reference to the Lord removing His glory from the temple in Jerusalem, 'His place', as a final judgment against an erring people who just would not heed the many, many rebukes and chastenings the Lord, in mercy, had directed toward them.

If you look at Ezekiel chapters 8-11, there you will find the Lord revealing to Ezekiel WHY it is He is judging His people by leaving the temple and the city of Jerusalem.

Finally, it is stated: "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. 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," Ezekiel 11:22-23.

Ezekiel's distressed state of dumb silence described in our text, is the result of him being given informed of this dreadful judgment that was coming upon his people.

I. I THINK IT CORRECT TO SAY THAT WE HAVE LITTLE CONCEPT OF THE DREADFUL IMPACT OF THIS REVELATION GIVEN TO EZEKIEL!

For a devoted Jew, and a Levitical priest at that, for such was Ezekiel, to learn that the Lord would remove His glory from the temple, from the midst of His people, was a horror unthinkable!

It was the equivalent of 'damnation' being pronounced upon that people. To be 'forsaken of God' was the ultimate judgment!

We have something of the horrific nature of this event given us in the 1st book of Samuel.

"Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see. And the man said



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unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son? And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken. And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years. And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her. And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it. And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband. And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken." 1Samuel 4:15-22.

The seizing of the Ark of the Covenant by the Philistines was a most momentous tragedy. It meant, "The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken."

What Ezekiel was made aware of was a more dreadful 'departure' by God's glory. In Eli's day, we are told by the Psalmist, the Lord yielded up' the Ark to the hands of the Philistines. "When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men; And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand," Psalm 78:59-61.

But what Ezekiel was made aware of was the Lord Himself removing His presence and glory from the temple and from the city of Jerusalem. It was a more measured, deliberate and terminating act of judgment!

In the day of Eli, it was a much lesser judgment, for I believe the apostasy and sin were chiefly amongst the priesthood, the sons of Eli. The nation had not corrupted itself as it had in the days of Ezekiel. Yet, even though it was a lesser stroke, the reaction of Eli, his fainting and falling and breaking his neck conveys something of the horror felt by him. The declaration of Eli's daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, and her naming of her child with a name so terrible, indicate that she too was horrified at the news of the taking of the Ark. It is most likely that her grief, seen in calling her newborn child 'Ichabod', was the cause of her death! Note what verse 20 says. "And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it." The joy of a man child being born was overwhelmed by the grief caused by the removal of the Ark of God.

These things help us to understand what 'horror of great darkness' filled the soul of Ezekiel and brought him to a state of distressed prostration for seven days.

II. OUR VIEW OF THIS REVELATION IS MITIGATED BY OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S ACTIONS OVER THE 2600 YEARS THAT HAVE PASSED SINCE THE DAY OF EZEKIEL.

The many wonderful mercies that the Lord showed to the people that He was about to abandon for a time, soften the dreadfulness of this event. As it was with the disciples when they witnessed the terrible scenes at Calvary when the Saviour was taken "and by wicked hands . . . crucified and slain," (Acts 2:23) they were filled with grief unspeakable! But what they learned afterwards changed that and removed that awful sense of desolation. The two on the road to Emmaus were 'gloomy' and 'sad'! But on being given an understanding of the wonderful purpose of God, as had long been revealed in the Scriptures, they were transformed. They were made to exclaim: "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" Luke 24:32.

Well, it is so with us, at least in measure. We can read of the events in Jerusalem in the days of Ezekiel, and because we know how the Lord visited His people in love and mercy, subsequent to the seventy years of exile which saw the city and temple rebuilt, we are not plunged into the distress of heart and soul that Ezekiel, who had no such knowledge, was plunged!

Now, I say that Ezekiel had no such knowledge, yet that needs explaining. If Ezekiel was ignorant of what



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the Lord planned to do by way of restoring Israel and rebuilding the temple and city and reviving the spiritual state of His people, it only goes to show how little even good men listen to God's Word!

Jeremiah had said, "And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end," Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10-11.

Those words had been preached at the most some eleven years prior to the dates of the events in Ezekiel chapter 3.

Now, Ezekiel was a Levite and he was 30 years of age as we are told in Ezekiel 1:1, and he had been a captive for five years as verse 2 states for he was taken as a captive at the time of the taking of king Jehoiachin.

According to 1st Chronicles 23:27, priests began their service in the temple at the age of twenty. "For by the last words of David the Levites were numbered from twenty years old and above." That means that Ezekiel had been in the service of the temple for five years before his captivity.

Jeremiah often preached in the vicinity of the temple precincts and it can surely be accepted that Ezekiel would have heard him preach. If he had not directly heard Jeremiah uttering the words recorded in his book, chapters 25 and 29, I would have no doubt that such words would have been discussed amongst the devout priests.

I surmise therefore that it is not unreasonable to assume that Ezekiel had access to this glorious truth that God was not going to abandon His people utterly! He would return to them in mercy. However, it seems for some reason Ezekiel was not then in possession of this truth and this contributed to his utter despair as recorded in Ezekiel 3:15!

How often we would be delivered from unnecessary despair and heartbreak if we only considered the Word of God! I turn you again to those two on the road to Emmaus. "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself," Luke 24:25-27.

Unbelief in and ignorance of the Word of God was the reason for their grief of heart.

III. THE LORD DOES NOT HIDE HIS PLANS AND PURPOSES FROM HIS PEOPLE.

No indeed! The whole purpose of the Bible is that we believers may be informed of the will of God.

Consider Paul's prayer for the Ephesian Christians.

"Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Ephesians 1:15-23.



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"That ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." That is what the Lord wills for us. We may know what God plans for His people and that to a very great extent.

We have the assurance of Romans 8:28. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

This is but an echo of the truth that Jeremiah declared, which we have already quoted. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."

But we are not only told that God is working all things together for our good and that His thoughts toward us are thoughts of peace, but He tells us in great detail just how He is going to bring that about.

1. First of all, it was through the death of His Son on the cross that He set out to accomplish His will toward His elect. For this reason the angels said to the shepherds, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people," Luke 2:10. The birth of Christ was the manifested beginning of the good things God planned for His people. The Lord Jesus is that 'unspeakable gift' (2 Corinthians 9:15) of which Paul speaks. The Lord Jesus, given of the Father to die for sinners at the cross, was then offered to mankind as the means of deliverance from sin. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John 3:16. Through receiving Christ by faith, we have eternal life. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," John 3:36.

2. Through Christ the rebellion of sinful man will be brought to an end. In Psalm 2 we have the character of wicked man. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us," verses 1-3. The psalm goes on to reveal the outcome of this confrontation between men and God. "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him," verses 8-12.

Things are not going to end well for those that pit themselves against God and His Christ!

3. The Bible sets forth most plainly and in quite minute detail, just how the rebellion will be brought to an end. The rebellion of man will culminate in the wicked regime of Antichrist. Much of Scripture is given over to giving us details of the last three and half years of his reign, which is a mere seven years in total. There are quite a few references to a period of time, measured in a number of ways. A 'time, times, and half a time', 'twelve hundred and sixty days' and 'forty and two months'. These terms all refer to the final three and a half years of the Antichrist's reign. I have often said that the Lord used these three forms of measurement in order to make clear that He is literally talking about three and a half years!

The Scriptures provide us with plenty of signs and evidences of the advancing of God's plan and the approach of the end of this age. Just as nature signals the rising and the setting of the sun, the beginning and the ending of each day, so the Lord signals for us the ending of this day of gospel grace for the Gentile world and the drawing near of the dawn of Christ's millennial reign over the earth.

A topic for all the prophets

The events at the close of this age are dealt with in varying detail by ALL the prophets. "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days," Acts 3:24. "These days" refer to the days of Christ's reign on the earth. The verse 23 states: "And



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it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people," Acts 3:23. That, very obviously, is not a reference to events in this age under the gospel. The sinner who defies Christ and His Word is not 'destroyed'! The word here means 'destroyed utterly', 'extirpated'. This is an immediate destruction as the phrase 'from among the people' suggests. That fate does not follow the rejection of Christ immediately. There will come that day when the penalty of sin and rebellion is visited upon the wicked but it is not, under the gospel, something that follows immediately upon a refusing to heed the gospel.

No, this is a reference to a future age. In Zechariah 14:4, we have a reference to that longed for day when Christ shall return. "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south," Zechariah 14:4.

The chapter continues and reveals events that follow the return of Christ. It is not, as some would say, the end of all things, the general judgment and the beginning of the eternal state for the believer. No! Instead we read of wonderful things taking place in the land of Israel and much further afield.

See verse 9. "And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one."

The Lord Jesus begins to reign as King over 'all the earth'! Furthermore, "Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited," verse 11.

There is a gathering of the wealth of the heathen round about unto Jerusalem, verse 14.

But most importantly, please note verses 16 to 19.

"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles." Zechariah 14:16-19.

Here is that punishment of the obstinate sinner mentioned in Acts 3:23. The events will take place in the age to come when, as verse 9 states, "And the LORD shall be king over all the earth."

The Saviour Himself deals in great detail with the events leading up to His return in His answer to the query of His disciples as the cross drew near. "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Matthew 24:3. The rest of the chapter along with the next chapter records His reply to them. This portion of God's Word gives us the plainest details of what lies ahead of us as this age comes to an end.

Seals

Of course, the Book of the Revelation in like manner gives us great and precise details of the events of the last days. This it does, first of all, under a revealing of the events during a three-fold seven periods of time covered by the opening of the seven seals, the blowing of the seven trumpets and the pouring out of the seven plagues.

Firstly, there are the events in that period covered by the opening of the seven seals upon the book of God, Revelation 5-8. The unsealing of God's book surely indicates that what has been written in the Word of God



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regarding the end of this age is about to happen. Christ is laying claim to that which is His under the Covenant made with Him by His Father.

I wrote quite some years ago in my book: "The Shadow of the Antichrist" (a copy of which may be downloaded [here](#)) the following regarding the sealed book of Revelation chapter 5.

"Sealed with seven seals.

An understanding of the significance of this sealing of the book may be had by looking at Jeremiah 32:6-12. In this chapter, Jeremiah is depicting the Lord delivering His people and their land into the hands of the Babylonians as a punishment for their sin, verses 2-5.

But Jeremiah also prophesied of the return of God's people to their own land in verse 15. The prophet was told to engage in the purchase of a field from his uncle's son and, by so doing, demonstrate that the land of Israel would return one day to the ownership of God's people and that such a purchase would not be a lost investment. The enemy would not always occupy Canaan. It would return one day to God's people. What is particularly interesting was the legal requirement to have two deeds of sale, one sealed and one unsealed (verse 11). When the property was to be redeemed, that is, bought back by the original owner or his descendants, then the redeemer would have to produce the sealed deed to prove his right of ownership.

Christ the Redeemer of God's elect possesses a sealed book that is evidence of His right of ownership of a people and all that pertains to their eternal happiness and glory. He made that purchase at Calvary when He offered His blood as the price of redeeming His elect from captivity and condemnation under sin. Christ's elect are His inheritance. He has yet to claim His possession and enter into it. He will one day.

Presently, each child of God is sealed "until the redemption of the purchased possession," Ephesians 1:14. The day of the opening of the seals and the claiming of His inheritance by Christ draws on.

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh," Luke 21:28. (Shadow of the Antichrist, chapter 5, the Sealed Book, the Slain Lamb and the Singing saints.)

Trumpets

The unsealing of the book is followed by a blowing of seven trumpets, chapters 8-9 and 11. I believe that this sounding of the trumpets takes place within the time covered by the opening of the seventh seal. So we are thus given an enlarged picture of that seventh period and the events which will take place within that time frame.

The trumpet is ever connected with war. The time of God's forbearance of man's sinful rebellion is about to end and the time of the appearance of the Saviour is drawing near. It is said of Him: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war," Revelation 19:11. God does show great tolerance and longsuffering toward men in their wickedness. His patience in the days of Noah illustrates this truth. "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water," 1Peter 3:19-20. As it was then, so it will be again. Patience will end and judgment will fall!

This increasingly detailed revelation of God's truth to His people is a common feature of Scripture. You have only to think of God revealing His purpose to Abraham in Genesis 12, 13, 15 & 17. There progressive revelation is clearly seen. Surely we can understand this principle since it is practised in every educational system known to man!

Plagues

Then comes the outpouring of the seven last plagues, Revelation 15:1. Again, I believe that there is an en-



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larging of the last period of the previous seven periods and there is a showing us what will take place literally within days of the return of Christ.

Yes, the Lord Jesus and the prophets, Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, David, Zechariah - I need not name them all - reveal to us God's wonderful purpose for His people.

4. We are also given details of what will happen after the return of Christ when He shall reign for 1000 years and then that is followed by the bringing in of the new heavens and the new earth and the eternal abode of the saints. Isaiah chapters 2, 11, 14 and Zechariah chapters 12-14 and above all Revelation 20, are but a few of the wonderful passages that deal with this topic.

The Lord Jesus will bring in 'everlasting righteousness.' This earth will be reclaimed from the evil grasp of the devil and sinful men. It will be purged by fire and become the eternal abode of the saints for they shall "inherit the earth," Matthew 5:5.

"But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. . . . But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up," 2 Peter 3:7, 10.

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death," Revelation 21:3-8.

Thus, the purpose of God shall be finished.

IV. THERE IS ONE MORE THING WE SHOULD LEARN FROM EZEKIEL'S SEVEN DAYS OF SILENCE AND IT IS THIS - HOW VITAL AND REAL OUGHT THE THINGS OF GOD BE TO HIS PEOPLE!

When Ezekiel understood that the Lord was about to withdraw from Jerusalem and His people Israel, it greatly affected him. He was not indifferent to this information about the affairs of God or apathetic with regards the result of the events coming upon the sinful people Israel.

Let sinful man stop his ears to God's Word and treat it with a bored dismissiveness! But Christian that is not how you should hear and react to the Word of God.

Let us heed the words of James.

"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was," James 1:21-24.

To rightly hear the Word of God there must be a laying aside of the trifles and vanities of this world and the common indulgences of worldly men who care nothing for the things of God and live as if there is neither God nor eternity!

Think of how the inroads of sin and its threat to the cause of God impacted upon Joshua (Joshua 7:1), Ezra



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(9:1-3), upon the servants of Hezekiah and the king himself (2 Kings 18:37, 19:1). The Bible is filled with examples of godly men for whom the eternal, invisible affairs of the Kingdom of God were more real than the things of time and sense.

The mindset we ought to have is that set forth by Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:17-18.

"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." Did not the Lord Jesus display this singleness of mind and heart? " Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," Philippians 2:5-8. Nothing else mattered to the Lord Jesus. He said, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Luke 2:49. Therefore, "when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem," Luke 9:51.

If we have this mind in us then we will "seek . . . first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," and know that if we do, "all these things shall be added unto you," Matthew 6:33.

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