

Spurgeon on Ezekiel

DEVOTIONALS ON EZEKIEL FROM SPURGEON'S FAITH'S CHECKBOOK

Jan 27

Precious Repentance "And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye hate committed" (Ezekiel 20:43).

When we are accepted of the LORD and are standing in the place of favor, and peace, and safety, then we are led to repent of all our failures and miscarriages toward our gracious God. So precious is repentance that we may call it a diamond of the first water, and this is sweetly promised to the people of God as one most sanctifying result of salvation. He who accepts repentance also gives repentance; and He gives it not out of "the bitter box" but from among those "wafers made with honey" on which He feeds His people. A sense of blood-bought pardon and of undeserved mercy is the best means of dissolving a heart of stone. Are we feeling hard? Let us think of covenant love, and then we shall leave sin, lament sin, and loathe sin; yea, we shall loathe ourselves for sinning against such infinite love. Let us come to God with this promise of penitence and ask Him to help us to remember, and repent, and regret, and re- turn. Oh, that we could enjoy the meltings of holy sorrow! What a relief would a flood of tears be! LORD, smite the rock, or speak to the rock, and cause the waters to flow!

March 15

God is a Sanctuary "Therefore say, Thus saith the LORD God; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a Little Sanctuary in the countries where they shall come" (Ezekiel 11:16).

Banished from the public means of grace, we are not removed from the grace of the means. The LORD who places His people where they feel as exiles will Himself be with them and be to them all that they could have had at home, in the place of their solemn assemblies. Take this to yourselves, O ye who are called to wander! God is to His people a place of refuge. They find sanctuary with Him from every adversary, He is their place of worship, too. He is with them as with Jacob when he slept in the open field, and rising, said, "Surely God was in this place," To them also He will be a sanctuary of quite, like the Holy of Holies, which was the noiseless abode of the Eternal. They shall be quiet from fear of evil. God Himself, in Christ Jesus, is the sanctuary of mercy. The Ark of the Covenant is the LORD Jesus, and Aaron's rod, the pot of manna, the tables of the law, all are in Christ our sanctuary. In God we find the shrine of holiness and of communion. What more do we need? O LORD, fulfill this promise and be ever to us as a little sanctuary!

April 19

An Expert Searcher "For thus saith the LORD God; Behold, I, even I, will both search My sheep, and seek them out" [Ezekiel 34:11](#).

This He does at the first when His elect are like wandering sheep that know not the Shepherd or the fold. How wonderfully doth the LORD find out His chosen! Jesus is great as a seeking Shepherd as well as a saving Shepherd. Though many of those His Father gave Him have gone as near to hell-gate as they well can, yet the LORD by searching and seeking discovers them and draws nigh to them in grace. He has sought out us: let us have good hope for those who are laid upon our hearts in prayer, for He will find them out also. The LORD repeats this process when any of His flock stray from the pastures of truth and holiness. They may fall into gross error, sad sin, and grievous hardness; but yet the LORD, who has become a surety for them to His Father, will not suffer one of them to go so far as to perish. He will by providence and grace pursue them into foreign lands, into abodes of poverty, into dens of obscurity, into depths of despair; He will not lose one of all that the Father has given Him. It is a point of honor with Jesus to seek and to save all the flock, without a single exception. What a promise to plead, if at this hour I am compelled to cry, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep!"

June 30

Back, Then Forward "Nevertheless I will remember My Covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an Everlasting Covenant" (Ezekiel 16:60).

Notwithstanding our sins, the LORD is still faithful in His love to us. He looks back. See how He remembers those early days of ours when He took us into covenant with Himself, and we gave ourselves over to Him. Happy days those! The LORD does not twit us with them and charge us with being insincere. No, He looks rather to His covenant with us than to our covenant with Him. There was no hypocrisy in that sacred compact, on His part, at any rate. How gracious is the LORD thus to look back in love! He looks forward also. He is resolved that the covenant shall not fail. If we do not stand to it, He does. He solemnly declares, "I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant." He has no mind to draw back from His promises. Blessed be His name, He sees the sacred seal, "the blood of the everlasting covenant," and He remembers our Surety, in whom He ratified that covenant, even His own dear Son; and therefore He rests in His covenant engagements. "He abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself." O LORD, lay this precious word upon my heart and help me to feed upon it all this day!

August 25

Food and Rest "I will feed My flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the LORD God" (Ezekiel 34:15).

Under the divine shepherdry saints are fed to the full. Theirs is not a windy, unsatisfying mess of mere human "thought," but the LORD feeds them upon the solid, substantial truth of divine revelation. There is real nutriment for the soul in Scripture brought home to the heart by the Holy Spirit. Jesus Himself is the true life-sustaining Food of believers. Here our Great Shepherd promises that such sacred nourishment shall be given us by His own self. If, on the LORD's Day, our earthly shepherd is empty-handed, the LORD is not. When filled with holy truth the mind rests. Those whom Jehovah feeds are at peace. No dog shall worry them, no wolf shall devour them, no restless propensities shall disturb them. They shall lie down and digest the food which they have enjoyed. The doctrines of grace are not only sustaining but consoling: in them we have the means for building up and lying down. If preachers do not give us rest, let us look to the LORD for it. This day may the LORD cause us to feed in the pastures of the Word and make us to lie down in them. May no folly and no worry but meditation and peace mark this day.

August 26

He of Tender Conscience "I will judge between cattle and cattle" (Ezekiel 34:22).

Some are fat and flourishing, and therefore they are unkind to the feeble. This is a grievous sin and causes much sorrow. Those thrustings with side and with shoulder, those pushings of the diseased with the horn, are a sad means of offense in the assemblies of professing believers. The LORD takes note of these proud and unkind deeds, and He is greatly angered by them, for He loves the weak. Is the reader one of the despised? Is he a mourner in Zion and a marked man because of his tender conscience? Do his brethren judge him harshly? Let him not resent their conduct; above all let him not push and thrust in return. Let him leave the matter in the LORD's hands. He is the Judge. Why should we wish to intrude upon His office? He will decide much more righteously than we can. His time for judgment is the best, and we need not be in a hurry to hasten it on. Let the hard-hearted oppressor tremble. Even though he may ride roughshod over others with impunity for the present, all his proud speeches are noted, and for every one of them account must be given before the bar of the great Judge. Patience, my soul! Patience! The LORD knoweth thy grief. Thy Jesus hath pity upon thee!

September 3

Out of Spiritual Death "And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up out of your graves" (Ezekiel 37:13).

Indeed it must be so: those who receive life from the dead are sure to recognize the hand of the LORD in such a resurrection. This is the greatest and most remarkable of all changes that a man can undergo -- to be brought out of the grave of spiritual death and made to rejoice in the light and liberty of spiritual life. None could work this but the living God, the LORD and giver of life. Ah, me! How well do I remember when I was lying in the valley full of dry bones, as dry as any of them! Blessed was the day when free and sovereign grace sent the man of God to prophesy upon me! Glory be to God for the stirring which that word of faith caused among the dry bones. More blessed still was that heavenly breath from the four winds which made me live! Now know I the quickening Spirit of the ever-living Jehovah, Truly Jehovah is the living God, for He made me live. My new life even in its pinings and sorrowings is clear proof to me that the LORD can kill and make alive. He is the only God. He is all that is great, gracious, and glorious, and my quickened soul adores Him as the great I AM. All glory be unto His sacred name! As long as I live I will praise Him.

September 24

The Life-Giving Stream "And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live" (Ezekiel 47:9).

The living waters, in the prophet's vision, flowed into the Dead Sea and carried life with them, even into that stagnant lake. Where grace goes, spiritual life is the immediate and the everlasting consequence. Grace proceeds sovereignly according to the will of God, even as a river in all its windings follows its own sweet will; and wherever it comes it does not wait for life to come to it, but it creates life by its own quickening flow. Oh, that it would pour along our streets and flood our slums! Oh, that it would now come into my house and rise till every chamber were made to swim with it! LORD, let the living water flow to my family and my friends, and let it not pass me by. I hope I have drunk of it already; but I desire to bathe in it, yea, to swim in it. O my Savior, I need life more abundantly. Come to me, I pray Thee, till every part of my nature is vividly energetic and intensely active. Living God, I pray Thee, fill me with Thine own life. I am a poor, dry stick; come and make me so to live that, like Aaron's rod, I may bud and blossom and bring forth fruit unto Thy glory. Quicken me, for the sake of my LORD Jesus. Amen.

October 30

Thorough Cleansing "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you" (Ezekiel 36:25).

What an exceeding joy is this! He who has purified us with the blood of Jesus will also cleanse us by the water of the Holy Spirit. God hath said it, and so it must be, "Ye shall be clean." LORD, we feel and mourn our uncleanness, and it is cheering to be assured by Thine own mouth that we shall be clean. Oh, that Thou wouldst make a speedy work of it! He will deliver us from our worst sins. The uprisings of unbelief and the deceitful lusts which war against the soul, the vile thoughts of pride, and the suggestions of Satan to blaspheme the sacred name—all these shall be so purged away as never to return. He will also cleanse us from all our idols, whether of gold or of clay: our impure loves and our excessive love of that which in itself is pure. That which we have idolized shall either be broken from us or we shall be broken off from it. It is God who speaks of what He Himself will do. Therefore is this word established and sure, and we may boldly look for that which it guarantees to us. Cleansing is a covenant blessing, and the covenant is ordered in all things and sure.

November 9

Necessary Knowledge "Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are My people, saith the LORD God" (Ezekiel 34:30).

To be the LORD's own people is a choice blessing, but to know that we are such is a comfortable blessing. It is one thing to hope that God is with us and another thing to know that He is so. Faith saves us, but assurance satisfies us. We take God to be our God when we believe in Him; but we get the joy of Him when we know that He is ours and that we are His. No believer should be content with hoping and trusting; he should ask the LORD to lead him on to full assurance, so that matters of hope may become matters of certainty. It is when we enjoy covenant blessings and see our LORD Jesus raised up for us as a plant of renown that we come to a clear knowledge of the favor of God toward us. Not by law, but by grace do we learn that we are the LORD's people. Let us always turn our eyes in the direction of free grace. Assurance of faith can never come by the works of the law. It is an evangelical virtue and can only reach us in a gospel way. Let us not look within. Let us look to the LORD alone. As we see Jesus we shall see our salvation. LORD, send us such a flood-tide of Thy love that we shall be washed beyond the mire of doubt and fear.

December 3

Peace Whatever Exposure "I will make them a Covenant Of Peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods" (Ezekiel 34:25).

It is the height of grace that Jehovah should be in covenant with man, a feeble, sinful, and dying creature. Yet the LORD has solemnly entered into a faithful compact with us, and from that covenant He will never turn aside. In virtue of this covenant we are safe. As lions and wolves are driven off by shepherds, so shall all noxious influences be chased away. The LORD will give us rest from disturbers and destroyers; the evil beasts shall cease out of the land. O LORD, make this Thy promise good even now! The LORD's people are to enjoy security in places of the greatest exposure: wilderness and woods are to be as pastures and folds to the flock of Christ. If the LORD does not change the place for the better, He will make us the better in the place. The wilderness is not a place to dwell in, but the LORD can make it so; in the woods one feels hound to watch rather than to sleep, and yet the LORD giveth His beloved sleep even there. Nothing without or within should cause any fear to the child of God. By faith the wilderness can become the suburbs of heaven and the woods the vestibule of glory.

DEVOTIONALS ON EZEKIEL FROM SPURGEON'S MORNING AND EVENING

Evening, January 6

“Now the hand of the Lord was upon me in the evening.” — Ezekiel 33:22

In the way of *judgment* this may be the case, and, if so, be it mine to consider the reason of such a visitation, and bear the rod and him that hath appointed it. I am not the only one who is chastened in the night season; let me cheerfully submit to the affliction, and carefully endeavour to be profited thereby. But the hand of the Lord may also be felt in another manner, strengthening the soul and lifting the spirit upward towards eternal things. O that I may in this sense feel the Lord dealing with me! A sense of the divine presence and indwelling bears the soul towards heaven as upon the wings of eagles. At such times we are full to the brim with spiritual joy, and forget the cares and sorrows of earth; the invisible is near, and the visible loses its power over us; servant-body waits at the foot of the hill, and the master-spirit worships upon the summit in the presence of the Lord. O that a hallowed season of divine communion may be vouchsafed to me this evening! The Lord knows that I need it very greatly. My graces languish, my corruptions rage, my faith is weak, my devotion is cold; all these are reasons why his healing hand should be laid upon me. His hand can cool the heat of my burning brow, and stay the tumult of my palpitating heart. That glorious right hand which moulded the world can new-create my mind; the unwearied hand which bears the earth's huge pillars up can sustain my spirit; the loving hand which incloses all the saints can cherish me; and the mighty hand which breaketh in pieces the enemy can subdue my sins. Why should I not feel that hand touching me this evening? Come, my soul, address thy God with the potent plea, that Jesus' hands were pierced for thy redemption, and thou shalt surely feel that same hand upon thee which once touched Daniel and set him upon his knees that he might see visions of God.

Morning, January 22

“Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest?” — Ezekiel 15:2

These words are for the humbling of God's people; they are called God's vine, but what are they by nature more than others? They, by God's goodness, have become fruitful, having been planted in a good soil; the Lord hath trained them upon the walls of the sanctuary, and they bring forth fruit to his glory; but what are they without their God? What are they without the continual influence of the Spirit, begetting fruitfulness in them? O believer, learn to reject pride, seeing that thou hast no ground for it. Whatever thou art, thou hast nothing to make thee proud. The more thou hast, the more thou art in debt to God; and thou shouldst not be proud of that which renders thee a debtor. Consider thine origin; look back to what thou wast. Consider what thou wouldst have been but for divine grace. Look upon thyself as thou art now. Doth not thy conscience reproach thee? Do not thy thousand wanderings stand before thee, and tell thee that thou art unworthy to be called his son? And if he hath made thee anything, art thou not taught thereby that it is grace which hath made thee to differ? Great believer, thou wouldst have been a great sinner if God had not made thee to differ. O thou who art valiant for truth, thou wouldst have been as valiant for error if grace had not laid hold upon thee. Therefore, be not proud, though thou hast a large estate—a wide domain of grace, thou hadst not once a single thing to call thine own except thy sin and misery. Oh! strange infatuation, that thou, who hast borrowed everything, shouldst think of exalting thyself; a poor dependent pensioner upon the bounty of thy Saviour, one who hath a life which dies without fresh streams of life from Jesus, and yet proud! Fie on thee, O silly heart!

Evening, February 17

“Whereas the Lord was there.” — Ezekiel 35:10

Edom’s princes saw the whole country left desolate, and counted upon its easy conquest; but there was one great difficulty in their way—quite unknown to them—“ *The Lord was there* ”; and in his presence lay the special security of the chosen land. Whatever may be the machinations and devices of the enemies of God’s people, there is still the same effectual barrier to thwart their design. The saints are God’s heritage, and he is in the midst of them, and will protect his own. What comfort this assurance yields us in our troubles and spiritual conflicts! We are constantly opposed, and yet perpetually preserved! How often Satan shoots his arrows against our *faith* , but our faith defies the power of hell’s fiery darts; they are not only turned aside, but they are quenched upon its shield, for “the Lord is there.” *Our good works* are the subjects of Satan’s attacks. A saint never yet had a virtue or a grace which was not the target for hellish bullets: whether it was hope bright and sparkling, or love warm and fervent, or patience all-enduring, or zeal flaming like coals of fire, the old enemy of everything that is good has tried to destroy it. The only reason why anything virtuous or lovely survives in us is this, “the Lord is there.”

If the Lord be with us through life, we need not fear for our dying confidence; for *when we come to die* , we shall find that “the Lord is *there* ”; where the billows are most tempestuous, and the water is most chill, we shall feel the bottom, and know that it is good: our feet shall stand upon the Rock of Ages when time is passing away. Beloved, from the first of a Christian’s life to the last, the only reason why he does not perish is because “ *the Lord is there* .” When the God of everlasting love shall change and leave his elect to perish, then may the Church of God be destroyed; but not till then, because it is written, JEHOVAH SHAMMAH , “ *The Lord is there* .”

Morning, February 19

“Thus saith the Lord God; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.” — Ezekiel 36:37

Prayer is the forerunner of mercy. Turn to sacred history, and you will find that scarcely ever did a great mercy come to this world unheralded by supplication. You have found this true in your own personal experience. God has given you many an unsolicited favour, but still great prayer has always been the prelude of great mercy with you. When you first found peace through the blood of the cross, you had been praying much, and earnestly interceding with God that he would remove your doubts, and deliver you from your distresses. Your assurance was the result of prayer. When at any time you have had high and rapturous joys, you have been obliged to look upon them as answers to your prayers. When you have had great deliverances out of sore troubles, and mighty helps in great dangers, you have been able to say, “I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.” Prayer is always the preface to blessing. It goes before the blessing *as the blessing’s shadow* . When the sunlight of God’s mercies rises upon our necessities, it casts the shadow of prayer far down upon the plain. Or, to use another illustration, when God piles up a hill of mercies, he himself shines behind them, and he casts on our spirits the shadow of prayer, so that we may rest certain, if we are much in prayer, our pleadings are the shadows of mercy. Prayer is thus connected with the blessing *to show us the value of it* . If we had the blessings without asking for them, we should think them common things; but prayer makes our mercies more precious than diamonds. The things we ask for are precious, but we do not realize their preciousness until we have sought for them earnestly.

“Prayer makes the darken’d cloud withdraw;

Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw;

Gives exercise to faith and love;

Brings every blessing from above.”

Morning, February 24

“I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.” — Ezekiel 34:26

Here is *sovereign mercy* —“I will give them the shower in its season.” Is it not sovereign, *divine* mercy?—for who can say, “I will give them showers,” except God? There is only one voice which can speak to the clouds, and bid them beget the rain. Who sendeth down the rain upon the earth? Who scattereth the showers upon the green herb? Do not I, the Lord? So grace is the gift of God, and is not to be created by man. It is also *needed* grace. What would the ground do without showers? You may break the clods, you may sow your seeds, but what can you do without the rain? As absolutely needful is the divine blessing. In vain you labour, until God the plenteous shower bestows, and sends salvation down. Then, it is *plenteous grace*. “I will send them showers.” It does not say, “I will send them drops,” but “showers.” So it is with grace. If God gives a blessing, he usually gives it in such a measure that there is not room enough to receive it. Plenteous grace! Ah! we want plenteous grace to keep us humble, to make us prayerful, to make us holy; plenteous grace to make us zealous, to preserve us through this life, and at last to land us in heaven. We cannot do without saturating showers of grace. Again, it is *seasonable grace*. “I will cause the shower to come down *in his season*.” What is thy season this morning? Is it the season of drought? Then that is the season for showers. Is it a season of great heaviness and black clouds? Then that is the season for showers. “As thy days so shall thy strength be.” And here is a *varied* blessing. “I will give thee *showers* of blessing.” The word is in the plural. All kinds of blessings God will send. All God’s blessings go together, like links in a golden chain. If he gives converting grace, he will also give comforting grace. He will send “showers of blessing.” Look up today, O parched plant, and open thy leaves and flowers for a heavenly watering.

Evening, March 28

“I will accept you with your sweet savour.” — Ezekiel 20:41

The merits of our great Redeemer are as sweet savour to the Most High. Whether we speak of the active or passive righteousness of Christ, there is an equal fragrance. There was a sweet savour in his active life by which he honoured the law of God, and made every precept to glitter like a precious jewel in the pure setting of his own person. Such, too, was his passive obedience, when he endured with un murmuring submission, hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness, and at length sweat great drops of blood in Gethsemane, gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked out the hair, and was fastened to the cruel wood, that he might suffer the wrath of God in our behalf. These two things are sweet before the Most High; and for the sake of his doing and his dying, his substitutionary sufferings and his vicarious obedience, the Lord our God accepts us. What a preciousness must there be in him to overcome our want of preciousness! What a sweet savour to put away our ill savour! What a cleansing power in his blood to take away sin such as ours! and what glory in his righteousness to make such unacceptable creatures to be accepted in the Beloved! Mark, believer, how sure and unchanging must be our acceptance, since it is *in him*! Take care that you never doubt your acceptance in Jesus. You cannot be accepted without Christ; but, when you have received his merit, you cannot be unaccepted. Notwithstanding all your doubts, and fears, and sins, Jehovah’s gracious eye never looks upon you in anger; though he sees sin in you, in yourself, yet when he looks at you through Christ, he sees no sin. You are always accepted in Christ, are always blessed and dear to the Father’s heart. Therefore lift up a song, and as you see the smoking incense of the merit of the Saviour coming up, this evening, before the sapphire throne, let the incense of your praise go up also.

Evening, April 28

“All the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted.” — Ezekiel 3:7

Are there no exceptions? No, not one. Even the favoured race are thus described. Are the best so bad?—then what must the worst be? Come, my heart, consider how far thou hast a share in this universal accusation, and while considering, be ready to take shame unto thyself wherein thou mayst have been guilty. The first charge is *impudence*, or hardness of forehead, a want of holy shame, an unhallowed boldness in evil. Before my conversion, I could sin and feel no compunction, hear of my guilt and yet remain unhumbled, and even confess my iniquity and manifest no inward humiliation on account of it. For a sinner to go to God’s house and pretend to pray to him and praise him argues a brazen-facedness of the worst kind! Alas! since the day of my new birth I have doubted my Lord to his face, murmured unblushingly in his presence, worshipped before him in a slovenly manner, and sinned without bewailing myself concerning it. If my forehead were not as an adamant, harder than flint, I should have far more holy fear, and a far deeper contrition of spirit. Woe is me, I am one of the impudent house of Israel. The second charge is *hardheartedness*, and I must not venture to plead innocent here. Once I had nothing but a heart of stone, and although through grace I now have a new and fleshy heart, much of my former obduracy remains. I am not affected by the death of Jesus as I ought to be; neither am I moved by the ruin of my fellow men, the wickedness of the times, the chastisement of my heavenly Father, and my own failures, as I should be. O that my heart would melt at the recital of my Saviour’s sufferings and death. Would to God I were rid of this nether millstone within me, this hateful body of death. Blessed be the name of the Lord, the disease is not incurable, the Saviour’s precious blood is the universal solvent, and me, even me, it will effectually soften, till my heart melts as wax before the fire.

Evening, July 7

“When I passed by thee, I said unto thee, Live.” — Ezekiel 16:6

Saved one, consider gratefully this mandate of mercy. Note that this fiat of God is *majestic*. In our text, we perceive a sinner with nothing in him but sin, expecting nothing but wrath; but the eternal Lord passes by in his glory; he looks, he pauses, and he pronounces the solitary but royal word, “Live.” There speaks a God. Who but he could venture thus to deal with life and dispense it with a single syllable? Again, this fiat is *manifold*. When he saith “Live,” it includes many things. Here is judicial life. The sinner is ready to be condemned, but the mighty One saith, “Live,” and he rises pardoned and absolved. It is spiritual life. We knew not Jesus—our eyes could not see Christ, our ears could not hear his voice—Jehovah said “Live,” and we were quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. Moreover, it includes glory-life, which is the perfection of spiritual life. “I said unto thee, Live:” and that word rolls on through all the years of time till death comes, and in the midst of the shadows of death, the Lord’s voice is still heard, “Live!” In the morning of the resurrection it is that self-same voice which is echoed by the arch-angel, “Live,” and as holy spirits rise to heaven to be blest for ever in the glory of their God, it is in the power of this same word, “Live.” Note again, that it is an *irresistible* mandate. Saul of Tarsus is on the road to Damascus to arrest the saints of the living God. A voice is heard from heaven and a light is seen above the brightness of the sun, and Saul is crying out, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” This mandate is a mandate of *free grace*. When sinners are saved, it is only and solely because God *will* do it to magnify his free, unpurchased, unsought grace. Christians, see your position, debtors to grace; show your gratitude by earnest, Christlike lives, and as God has bidden you live, see to it that you live in earnest.

Evening, August 15

“And I will give you an heart of flesh.” — Ezekiel 36:26

A heart of flesh is known by its *tenderness concerning sin*. To have indulged a foul imagination, or to have allowed a wild desire to tarry even for a moment, is quite enough to make a heart of flesh grieve before the Lord. The heart of stone calls a great iniquity nothing, but not so the heart of flesh.

“If to the right or left I stray,
That moment, Lord, reprove;
And let me weep my life away,
For having grieved thy love”

The heart of flesh is *tender of God’s will*. My Lord Will-be-will is a great blusterer, and it is hard to subject him to God’s will; but when the heart of flesh is given, the will quivers like an aspen leaf in every breath of heaven, and bows like an osier in every breeze of God’s Spirit. The natural will is cold, hard iron, which is not to be hammered into form, but the renewed will, like molten metal, is soon moulded by the hand of grace. In the fleshy heart there is a *tenderness of the affections*. The hard heart does not love the Redeemer, but the renewed heart burns with affection towards him. The hard heart is selfish and coldly demands, “Why should I weep for sin? Why should I love the Lord?” But the heart of flesh says; “Lord, thou knowest that I love thee; help me to love thee more!” Many are the privileges of this renewed heart; “’Tis here the Spirit dwells, ’tis here that Jesus rests.” It is fitted to receive every spiritual blessing, and every blessing comes to it. It is prepared to yield every heavenly fruit to the honour and praise of God, and therefore the Lord delights in it. A tender heart is the best defence against sin, and the best preparation for heaven. A renewed heart stands on its watchtower looking for the coming of the Lord Jesus. Have you this heart of flesh?

Evening, November 2 “Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law.” — Psalm 119:53 (cf Ezekiel 9)

My soul, feelest thou this holy shuddering at the sins of others? for otherwise thou lackest inward holiness. David’s cheeks were wet with rivers of waters because of prevailing unholiness; Jeremiah desired eyes like fountains that he might lament the iniquities of Israel, and Lot was vexed with the conversation of the men of Sodom. **Those upon whom the mark was set in Ezekiel’s vision**, were those who sighed and cried for the abominations of Jerusalem. It cannot but grieve gracious souls to see what pains men take to go to hell. They know the evil of sin experimentally, and they are alarmed to see others flying like moths into its blaze. Sin makes the righteous shudder, because it violates a holy law, which it is to every man’s highest interest to keep; it pulls down the pillars of the commonwealth. Sin in others horrifies a believer, because it puts him in mind of the baseness of his own heart: when he sees a transgressor he cries with the saint mentioned by Bernard, “He fell to-day, and I may fall to-morrow.” Sin to a believer is horrible, because it crucified the Saviour; he sees in every iniquity the nails and spear. How can a saved soul behold that cursed kill-Christ sin without abhorrence? Say, my heart, dost thou sensibly join in all this? It is an awful thing to insult God to his face. The good God deserves better treatment, the great God claims it, the just God will have it, or repay his adversary to his face. An awakened heart trembles at the audacity of sin, and stands alarmed at the contemplation of its punishment. How monstrous a thing is rebellion! How direful a doom is prepared for the ungodly! My soul, never laugh at sin’s fooleries, lest thou come to smile at sin itself. It is thine enemy, and thy Lord’s enemy—view it with detestation, for so only canst thou evidence the possession of holiness, without which no man can see the Lord.

Evening, December 21

Ezekiel 16:10: "I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk."

See with what matchless generosity the Lord provides for his people's apparel. They are so arrayed that the divine skill is seen producing an unrivalled *broidered work*, in which every attribute takes its part and every divine beauty is revealed. No art like the art displayed in our salvation, no cunning workmanship like that beheld in the righteousness of the saints. Justification has engrossed learned pens in all ages of the church, and will be the theme of admiration in eternity. God has indeed "curiously wrought it." With all this elaboration there is mingled utility and durability, comparable to our being *shod with badgers' skins*. The animal here meant is unknown, but its skin covered the tabernacle, and formed one of the finest and strongest leathers known. The righteousness which is of God by faith endureth for ever, and he who is shod with this divine preparation will tread the desert safely, and may even set his foot upon the lion and the adder. Purity and dignity of our holy vesture are brought out in *the fine linen*. When the Lord sanctifies his people, they are clad as priests in pure white; not the snow itself excels them; they are in the eyes of men and angels fair to look upon, and even in the Lord's eyes they are without spot. Meanwhile the royal apparel is delicate and rich as *silk*. No expense is spared, no beauty withheld, no daintiness denied.

What, then? Is there no inference from this? Surely there is gratitude to be felt and joy to be expressed. Come, my heart, refuse not thy evening hallelujah! Tune thy pipes! Touch thy chords!

"Strangely, my soul, art thou arrayed

By the Great Sacred Three!

In sweetest harmony of praise

Let all thy powers agree."

COMMENTS ON EZEKIEL FROM JOHN MACARTHUR

Question to John MacArthur: In light of Hebrews 9, what is the purpose of the sacrificial system in Ezekiel?

Answer

You mean the millennial sacrificial system? In the time of the millennium, you have a picture of the millennial kingdom of Christ in Ezekiel 40-48, that when we get into the millennial kingdom, after the Lord comes and establishes his kingdom, there's going to be a sacrificial system of some kind going on in that millennial kingdom. In the light of Hebrews 9, what he means by that is since Christ is the "one offering," who satisfied all requirements and the sacrificial system has ended, why does God bring back the sacrificial system in the millennial kingdom?

The answer to the question is simply this: the same reason we have the Lord's Table today. We have the Lord's Table in which we take the body and the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and we go back to that, in the picture, in the drama that's played out in the Lord's Table as a memorial and a testimony to that.

I believe that the sacrificial system, as designed by God and revealed through Ezekiel, will be in the millennial kingdom, for the Jews, a memorial feast with the same kind of idea as the communion is for us. They will then, every time they offer those sacrifices, be seeing the One whom God sent to be the final sacrifice. So, since their connection is to the Old Testament, God will reinstitute those as a drama, as a memorial drama, to demonstrate and dramatize that Christ is the true Lamb pictured in all those sacrifices...just like every time we have communion, some people say, "Don't you just repeat the dying of Jesus?" Well, not really. We just continually memorialize and remember the one sacrifice. We, in the communion service, look back at it; they, at that time, will carry on the sacrifices that in the Old Testament look forward to it. www.biblebb.com

Question to John MacArthur: I have a question in relation to Ezekiel, chapter three, God appoints Ezekiel as a watchman over the House of Israel, and He says in verses 18 and 19, "When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet if you have warned the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered yourself."

My question is, "If what way or any are these verses applicable to modern day believers in relation to our responsibility to tell unbelievers about the Gospel?"

Answer

You have to go on, I think it is the eighteenth chapter of Ezekiel, where I think all that is kind of "flattened out" and you have individual responsibility advocated there very strongly. Let me just put it this way, a prophet of God stood in a very unique relationship to God, and with high, high, high privilege comes high, high, high responsibility. It would be much more like James 3:1 than any other thing, where it says, "Stop being so many teachers, for theirs is a greater condemnation." The more ministry you bite off, the more accountable you are. That's like Hebrews 13:17 says, "Submit yourselves to those who have the rule over you because they have to give an account for what they do. In other words, when you run real fast to get in the ministry, you better stop and realize what's involved.

Here you have a very unique and very special and very personal thing: God says to Ezekiel, "You are a prophet, you're anointed by me, you are called by me to a unique office--you better be faithful to that office or you will be required to pay a price. I don't think that he would have lost his salvation, I just think he would have demonstrated unfaithfulness and been severely chastened by God. Now, that is not something that can be extrapolated out of that thing and applied to every believer, as if to say that the blood of every unbeliever who dies and goes to hell, that we might have witnessed to, is on our hands. I think that it is a completely different situation. I think that you will never find anywhere in Scripture that I am responsible for somebody else's lostness. The only thing I find in Scripture is I am responsible to be obedient to the Lord to take the message to everyone. If I was responsible for somebody being lost then I ought to go to hell, but every person is responsible, and that is in the eighteenth chapter and he clarifies that there, so that where we all fit together is different from where a distinct prophet of God fits in his relationship to God. www.biblebb.com

Question to John MacArthur:

My question comes from Ezekiel Chapter 44. There is one verse here that seems kind of contradictory to what God's intending. God is speaking to Ezekiel and I am curious as to why He would say this. In verse 44:19, it says, "And when they go out into the outer court to the people, they shall put off their garments in which they have been ministering and lay them in the holy chambers. Then they shall put on the other garments, that they may not transmit holiness to the people with their garments." Now it seems to me that God would want the people to be holy, I mean, that's part of His desire, and yet here He says he doesn't want holiness transmitted.

Answer

Let me just give you a general feeling for that section of Scripture. Ezekiel 40 to 48 is a description of the Millennial Temple. It's a description of the temple that is to come, that is to be built during the time of the Millennium and in that Millennial Temple, there will be a re-institution of symbolic activity that was a part of the old covenant. That shouldn't surprise us, because as Christians, in the New Covenant, we have a symbol, which we engage in all the time, being the Lord's Table. We actually go through symbolically the blood and the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we know that that only happened once, and we don't do what the Catholics do, we don't transform that into the real body and the real blood of Christ. We understand it to be symbolic as a way of remembering the great thing that God has done. In the Old Testament, what was the greatest act of deliverance God did in the Old Testament? The deliverance out of Egypt, so the remembrance of that was built around the Passover and the Passover was a symbolic feast, which caused the people to remember the delivering power of God. Communion is a similar thing.

Now, I believe that when we get to the Kingdom, when we enter into our relationship with Jesus Christ in the fullness of our glorified form, there will be a glorious temple created in that future time. And in that time, I believe two things will occur. One, we will be having communion, because the Lord said, "Do this until I come and do it with you in my Kingdom". So, there will be, I believe, in the coming Kingdom of Jesus Christ, the activity of the communion as a remembrance of the cross and I also believe that according to Ezekiel 40 to 48, in that Millennial Temple there will also be a reenactment symbolically of the significance of the worship of the old covenant.

So, what you have there, in a symbolic form, is the activity of the temple and there will be, apparently, on the basis of that verse... the idea of holy here does not mean that the people are unholy, they are all holy because they are, I believe at this particular point, and it's a little bit debatable as to where this Millennial Temple is, but let's assume it's occupied by the holy redeemed of God... they're all holy people, but in a sense, apparently, there will be within that function of that temple in the glorified state certain people, set apart for certain priestly function, which is unique to them and the garments of which belong uniquely to them and not to the other people. So, I don't think that it's talking about transmitting holiness to those other people, in the sense of righteousness, but the idea is that a priest who functions in the Millennial Temple, in the wonderful symbolism that goes on there, will be uniquely a priest and the other people cannot commingle with that priestly function. And so that's why when he goes out among the people he sets aside his priestly garb, because it is indigenous, if you will, to that function alone. O.K? Good question.

MISCELLANEOUS ILLUSTRATIONS, ETC ON EZEKIEL

Ezekiel 7:8-9 “He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (Prov. 29:1).

The following incident is vouched for by a Church of England clergyman who knew all the circumstances.

A young woman, who had been brought up in a Christian home and who had often had very serious convictions in regard to the importance of coming to Christ, chose instead to take the way of the world. Much against the wishes of her godly mother, she insisted on keeping company with a wild, hilarious crowd, who lived only for the passing moment and tried to forget the things of eternity. Again and again she was pleaded with to turn to Christ, but she persistently refused to heed the admonitions addressed to her. Finally, she was taken with a very serious illness. All that medical science could do for her was done in order to bring about her recovery, but it soon became evident that the case was hopeless and death was staring her in the face. Still she was hard and obdurate when urged to turn to God in repentance and take the lost sinner's place and trust the lost sinner's Saviour. One night she awoke suddenly out of a sound sleep, a frightened look in her eyes, and asked excitedly, “Mother, what is Ezekiel 7:8 and 9 ?”

Her mother said, “What do you mean, my dear?”

She replied that she had had a most vivid dream. She thought there was a Presence in the room, who very solemnly said to her, “Read Ezekiel 7:8–9 .”

Not recalling the verses in question, the mother reached for a Bible. As she opened it, her heart sank as she saw the words, but she read them aloud to the dying girl:

“Now I will shortly pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee: and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense thee for all thine abominations. And mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will recompense thee according to thy ways and thine abominations that are in the midst of thee; and ye shall know that I am the Lord that smiteth.”

The poor sufferer, with a look of horror on her face, sank back on the pillow, utterly exhausted, and in a few moments she was in eternity. Once more it had been demonstrated that grace rejected brings judgment at last.

(From Illustrations of Bible Truth by H. A. Ironside, Moody Press, 1945, pp. 31-32)

The Covenant
Ezekiel 36:25ff

Jehovah-Shammah
Ezekiel 48:35

**The Lord proclaims His grace abroad!
“Behold, I change your hearts of stone;
Each shall renounce his idol-god,
And serve, henceforth, the Lord alone.**

**“My grace, a flowing stream, proceeds
To wash your filthiness away;
Ye shall abhor your former deeds,
And learn my statutes to obey.**

**“My truth the great design ensures,
I give myself away to you;
You shall be mine, I will be yours,
Your God unalterably true.**

**“Yet not unsought, or unimplored,
The plenteous grace I shall confer;
No—your whole hearts shall seek the
Lord,
I’ll put a praying spirit there.**

**“From the first breath of life divine
Down to the last expiring hour,
The gracious work shall all be mine,
Begun and ended in my power.”**

**As birds their infant brood protect,
And spread their wings to shelter them,
Thus saith the Lord to His elect,
“So will I guard Jerusalem.”**

**And what then is Jerusalem,
This darling object of His care?
Where is its worth in God’s esteem?
Who built it? who inhabits there?**

**Jehovah founded it in blood,
The blood of His incarnate Son;
There dwell the saints, once foes to God,
The sinners whom He calls His own.**

**There, though besieged on every side
Yet much beloved, and guarded well,
From age to age they have defied
The utmost force of earth and hell.**

**Let earth repent, and hell despair,
This city has a sure defence;
Her name is call’d, “The Lord is there,”
And who has power to drive Him thence?**

Olney Hymns, by William Cowper, from Cowper’s Poems, Sheldon & Company, New York

Ezekiel 33:3

The captain of the Lussitania (a passenger liner sunk by a German submarine, just prior to America’s declaration of war against Germany and its allies in World War I) is a fitting story of one who rejected a warning. He received a message while in New York that his great ship would be torpedoed before he reached Britain. He laughed at the idea, but it was true. Do not reject the warnings from God!

Why Study the Book of Ezekiel?

Many years ago Dr. Bonar was speaking on heaven and the great reunion of loved ones there, and in his eloquent way he pictured the believer newly come from the earth walking along the golden street and suddenly coming right up against a group of Old Testament sages and prophets. In a moment he recognized them and said, “Why, this is Ezekiel, isn’t it?” “Yes,” said Ezekiel. “I am so glad to meet you.” “And this is Micah, and Zechariah, and Amos.” And then Andrew Bonar said, “And just imagine Ezekiel’s saying, ‘Oh, you knew about me, did you? How did you like the book I wrote?’ “Book? What book was that? I am sorry to say I never read it.’ “And then Micah would say, ‘And what did you think of my book?’ “Let me see, was that in the Old Testament or in the New Testament? It seems to me I remember there was such a book.’ “How would you feel to have to meet these men and never have read their books” Some of you had better get busy. There is far too much time spent in reading novels and in reading the newspapers and too little time given to the Word of God. Good literature is fine; reading the newspaper is all right, but these things should not crowd out time for reading God’s Word. (from AMG Bible Illustrations. Chattanooga: AMG Publishers.)

A New Heart (Ezekiel 36:26)

A certain prisoner, most cunning and brutal, was singularly repulsive even in comparison with other prisoners. He had been known for his daring and for the utter absence of all feeling when committing acts of violence. The chaplain had spoken to him several times but had not succeeded even in getting an answer. The man was sullenly set against all instruction. At last he expressed a desire for a certain book, but as it was not in the library the chaplain pointed to the Bible which was placed in his cell, saying, "Did you ever read that Book?" He gave no answer but looked at the good man as if he would kill him. The question was kindly repeated, with the assurance that he would find it well worth reading. "Mister," said the convict, "you would not ask me such a question if you knew who I am. What have I to do with a book of that sort?" The chaplain answered, "I know all about you and that's why I think the Bible is the book for you." "It would do me no good," he cried. "I am past all feeling." Doubling up his fist, he struck the iron door of the cell and said, "My heart is as hard as that iron; there is nothing in any book that will ever touch me." "Well," said the chaplain, "you want a new heart. Did you ever read the covenant of grace?" To which the man answered sullenly by inquiring what he meant by such talk. His friend replied, "Listen to these words: 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you' " (Ezek. 36:26). The words struck the man with amazement. He asked to have the passage found for him in the Bible. He read the words again and again; and when the chaplain came back to him the next day, the wild beast was tamed. "Oh, sir," he said, "I never dreamed of such a promise! I never believed it possible that God would speak in such a way to men. If He gives me a new heart, it will be a miracle of mercy; and yet I think He is going to work that miracle upon me, for the very hope of a new nature is beginning to touch me as I never was touched before." (from AMG Bible Illustrations. Chattanooga: AMG Publishers.)

Homer Duncan has given a list of at least 25 references from the Prophets where God promises Israel that He will gather them to Canaan and give the land to them:

- (1) Isaiah 11:11 , 12
- (2) Isaiah 14:1–3
- (3) Isaiah 27:12 , 13
- (4) Isaiah 43:1–7
- (5) Jeremiah 16:14–16
- (6) Jeremiah 23:3–8
- (7) Jeremiah 29:14
- (8) Jeremiah 30:10 , 11
- (9) Jeremiah 31:8–10
- (10) Jeremiah 32:37 , 38
- (11) Ezekiel 11:17
- (12) Ezekiel 20:34
- (13) Ezekiel 20:41–42
- (14) Ezekiel 34:11–13
- (15) Ezekiel 36:24
- (16) Ezekiel 36:28
- (17) Ezekiel 36:33–38
- (18) Ezekiel 37:1–14
- (19) Ezekiel 37:21 , 22
- (20) Ezekiel 39:25–28
- (21) Hosea 1:10 , 11
- (22) Amos 9:14 , 15
- (23) Micah 4:4–7
- (24) Zephaniah 3:18–20
- (25) Zechariah 8:4–8

(From "Encyclopedia of 7700 illustrations : Garland TX: Bible Communications)

How God Used Ezekiel 36:25-26 in the life of Scottish Presbyterian preacher John Livingstone:

Among the Scottish Presbyterians—the “Covenanters”—was John Livingstone, born at Kilsyth, Scotland, in 1603, the son of a minister. John attended college intending to become a doctor, but he grew troubled about his life’s calling and resolved to set aside a day for prayer. Accordingly, on the day appointed, he retired to Cleghorn wood, where, after much confusion in the state of his soul, he at last thought it was made out to him that he must preach Jesus Christ. On January 2, 1625, he preached his first sermon in his father’s pulpit. He was soon preaching regularly. For a while, Livingstone wrote out all his sermons, reading to the people from a manuscript. But one day when he rose to preach, he spotted some friends who had already heard the sermon he planned to give. He quickly chose a new text and scribbled some notes. He discovered more assistance and more emotion in his own heart than ever he had found before; which made him never afterwards write any more of his sermons, except such short notes for the help of his memory.

His greatest sermon was delivered on Monday, June 21, 1630. The night before, he and his companions had devoted the entire evening to prayer. Now Livingstone felt weak and frightened as he stepped into the pulpit, but, mustering his strength, he read his text, Ezekiel 36:25–26 . Here he was led out in such a melting strain, that, by the downpouring of the Spirit from on high, a most discernible change was wrought upon above 500 of the hearers, who either dated their conversion, or some remarkable confirmation, from that day forward. It was the highlight of his ministry, but it wasn’t the end of it. He continued preaching in Scotland until driven to Holland, where he served the Lord in exile until his death at age 78