

Come Follow Me
Elo Viz production
Week 44
Ezekiel

In the first wave of Israel being captured and conquered Ezekiel was taken to Babylon in 605 B.C. He was a young man, we know he was younger than 30 because he turned 30 while he was in Babylon. We know this because in that day, just as in Jesus's day, their ministry didn't start until they turned 30. So Ezekiel's ministry began while he was in captivity. And what a mighty prophet he was. He had dreams and visions, prophesied great things and he did some strange things as directed by God. To understand his prophecies you need to understand the historical background on which they are based. We won't go through all of them here, but there are some great resources that explain in detail the events that took place and the history of why his prophecies were so profound. For our topic today I'd like to focus on just one principle that we can learn from these events and how to improve our lives as we study them.

From the days of Abraham, God in His mercy made a covenant with him. This covenant is essential to understanding why these events happened and what was prophesied to happen.

This covenant is outlined in the Gospel topics, it says:

“Abraham made covenants with God when he received the [gospel](#), when he was ordained a high priest, and when he entered into celestial [marriage](#). In these covenants, God promised great blessings to Abraham and his family. These blessings, which extend to all of Abraham's seed, are called the Abrahamic covenant.

Among the promises made to Abraham were the following:

- His posterity would be numerous (see [Genesis 17:5–6](#); [Abraham 2:9](#); [3:14](#)).
- His seed, or descendants, would receive the gospel and bear the [priesthood](#) (see [Abraham 2:9](#)).
- Through the ministry of his seed, “all the families of the earth [would] be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal” ([Abraham 2:11](#)).”

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/abrahamic-covenant?lang=eng>

The children of Israel are the direct seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So, the people that Ezekial is preaching to are the covenant people that are mentioned in the promises to Abraham. But there was a problem; these people broke their covenants. Thus the reason they were delivered into the hands of their enemies. What I find fascinating is that as soon as Jews were captured and their city destroyed. Almost immediately God gave them a way back. A promise to restore them to their nation and to once again become His people. This is proof that God truly does love His children, even when they dont love Him back. He allows them to be humbled and chastened in order for them to want to return to Him and His loving care.

Listen to these incredible words of God delivered through His prophet Ezekiel: Chapter 36: 9-11
“9 For, behold, I *am* for you, and I will **turn** unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown:
10 And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, *even* all of it: and the cities shall be **inhabited**, and the **wastes** shall be **builded**:
11 And I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old **estates**, and will do better *unto you* than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I *am* the Lord.”

This is what God does to those that are humbled and return to Him: “[I] will do better unto you than at your beginnings” And because of this “[We] shall know that [He] is the Lord” It teaches us that even though we as a covenant people are weak and make mistakes, even as far as to break our covenants with God. He will humble us and forgive us and welcome us back into His powerful covenant relationship with Him and bestow great blessings upon our heads.

It's the story of the prodigal son. It's the story of all of us. You may be saying “that's not me” , “I haven't strayed from the path”...Ahh... not so my friend.
Have you felt anger in your heart?... Then you need forgiveness.
Have you coveted someone else's possessions?... Then you need forgiveness.
Have you brushed away the promptings of the Holy Ghost, or passed over someone in need, judged someone unrighteously?... then you need forgiveness

Romans 3:9-13

“9 What then? are we better *than they*? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;
10 As it is written, There is **none righteous**, no, not one:
11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.
12 They are all gone out of the **way**, they are together become **unprofitable**; there is none that doeth **good**, no, not one.
13 Their **throat** *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the **poison** of asps *is* under their lips:”

Ecclesiastes 7:20

“20 For *there is* not a **just** man upon earth, that doeth good, and **sinneth** not.?”

Psalms 14:3

“3 They are all gone aside, they are *all* together become **filthy**: *there is* **none** that doeth good, no, not one.”

The Fact is that we read about the pains and trials that the children of Israel went through in order to be humbled, but we in our own ways are just like them. We have all made mistakes and strayed from His true path. In short, we all need Jesus. And we need Him because God knew we would not be perfect. He didn't expect us to be. All we wants; is for us to have a Covenant relationship with Him, to love Him and strive to be better every day of our lives.

In this last General conference a few weeks ago Elder Kevin W Pearson of the Seventy gave an amazing talk called: Are you still willing? In his talk he said this:

“Heavenly Father loves us perfectly, but that love comes with great expectations. He expects us to willingly place the Savior at the very center of our lives. The Savior is our perfect example of willingness to submit to the Father in all things. He is “the way, the truth, and the life.”³ He willingly atoned for our sins. He willingly eases our burdens, calms our fears, gives us strength, and brings peace and understanding to our hearts in times of distress and grief.”

“The covenant path is not a simple checklist; it is a process of spiritual growth and deepening commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. The central purpose of every commandment, principle, covenant, and ordinance is to build faith and trust in Christ. Our determination to center our lives on Christ, therefore, must be consistent—not conditional, situational, or superficial. We cannot afford to take vacation days or personal time off from our willingness to “stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places.”⁷ Discipleship is not cheap, because the companionship of the Holy Ghost is priceless.”

“Carnal security is seeking for and trusting in worldly things instead of Christ—in other words, looking through a secular lens instead of a spiritual lens. The Holy Ghost gives us the capacity to see “things as they really are, and ... as they really will be.”¹¹ Only “by the power of the Holy Ghost [can we] know the truth of all things”¹² and be not deceived. We place Christ at the center of our lives and pledge our willingness to obey His commandments not because we are blind but because we can see.¹³”

Then speaking about the parable of the 10 virgins, he said this:

“What about the foolish virgins? Why were they unwilling to carry a vessel of spiritual oil? Did they simply procrastinate? They were perhaps too casual because it was inconvenient or seemed unnecessary. Whatever the reason, they were deceived about the crucial role of Christ. This is Satan’s fundamental deception and why their lamps of testimony eventually went out for lack of spiritual oil. This parable is a metaphor for our time. Many leave the Savior and their covenants long before they leave His Church.”

This was true of the children of Israel back then and it is true in our world today. The world is a scary place but your world doesn't have to be. I'd like to conclude with a personal story that just happened the other day:

My 2 sons and I were returning from a short trip when we had a tire blow on our trailer while we're driving on the freeway. We quickly pulled over and assessed the situation, it literally exploded and sent rubber flying in all directions. We didn't have a spare tire and we were literally in the middle of nowhere. I got on the phone and within 2 hours we had some help and they put a new tire on and we were back on the road. As we drove away with a new tire on the trailer, I turned to my son and asked him. "At any time in that adventure did you feel scared, or anxious or frustrated?" He thought for a second and then said "no, I knew it was all going to be ok and that everything happens for a reason." I then asked him how my brother would have responded to that situation if it would have happened to him in those exact same conditions? (My brother left the church many years ago and lives his life only married to his addictions and bad habits.) He said, "Oh, it would be the end of the world, he would be angry and curse the universe yelling, why do things like this always happen to me?" Which is true. Any time anything inconvenient happens it's the universe out to get him. I then had the important opportunity to show my son in real life how the gospel brings us peace in joy despite what happens. I pointed out to him that this is why the Gospel of Jesus Christ is so important in our lives. Sure, stuff is going to happen, but because of our faith in Jesus Christ, we can be confident that things will all work out for our good. That we don't have a need to get angry or frustrated when things like this happen. We just need to sit back and be patient, observing the miraculous hands of God working miracles in our lives. This is the peace and joy that only the Gospel of Jesus Christ can bring into our lives.

Of this truth I testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, Amen.