

“Looking Past the Past”

January 15, 2017

CORE: In order to see lives, cities, nations restored—we must see what God sees—empowered by Him to LOOK PAST the PAST.

Ezekiel 37:1-10

Historical Background: In the days of Elijah...

- Israel was a fallen nation—Jerusalem & Temple destroyed
 - Israel (Northern) captive to Assyria in 722 BC
 - Judah (Southern) conquered by Babylon in 605, 597, & 586 BC
 - Most had died—a few strong survivors remained as slaves in Babylon
- HS leads Ezekiel into a vision of Israel’s future restoration
 - (Ezek. 37:16) “Two sticks tied together”—restored unity between Israel & Judah
 - Israel resettled as a people 2 times since Ezekiel’s prophecy:
 - (164 BC) Though still a divided nation
 - (1948-present) For the first time as a united Israel

1. EZEKIEL was EMPOWERED to look PAST THE PAST.

NOTE: Isaiah 46:10- *“The LORD makes know the end from the beginning.”*

a. Empowered to SEE.

- 7 times in Ezekiel’s book—“the hand of the Lord was upon me”—“Hand” means His “power & strength”
- “He caused me to see”—God’s power brought Him into closer examination & greater revelation—Lit.- *“to see with new eyes”*
- “FULL of bones”- destructive effect of lifelessness & hopelessness was everywhere
- “VERY dry”- w/o any hope of recovery
- INVITATION TO SEE WITH NEW EYES:
 - *“What do YOU see?”*
 - *“CAN these bones live?”*
 - 2 questions calling him to SEE & TRUST BEYOND the past.

b. Empowered to SAY—what we SEE.

- “Prophesy”—*to bubble up & bubble forth*
- “Hear”—*Shama- “to be present with the Presence” (Past the past)*
- “Prophesy to the breath”—*Ruach-“spirit” (renewal, refreshing, reviving, restoring, retrieving, & resurrecting) “an exceeding great army” arises!*

Conclusion:

- When God said, “*Can these bones live?*”—He wasn’t seeking information—He was stirring up inspiration.
 - With one question—He shifted Ezekiel’s perspective—transforming the way he saw his nation & generation: years of death—lost years—could be restored.
2. **Jesus called His disciples (and us) to LOOK PAST THE PAST.**

NOTE: Jesus walked the land of Israel over 500 years after the days of Ezekiel—delivering the same message. “Buy the field” and “find the treasure” (Matthew 13:44)—LOOK PAST the PAST!

John 9:1-7 (NIV)- The man born blind.

- “*Who sinned?*” (NOTE: Culturally a shamed outcast—rejected by God due to personal or generational sins)
- Jesus: “*Neither!*”
- Then Jesus announced that He was about to “*display the works of God*” in *this man’s life!* (NOTE: He was NOT blaming this man’s blindness on God) (verses 3-5)!
- Jesus then took “spit”—the very thing used to curse & devalue this man—and healed him, restoring his value, and mending his broken heart.

Conclusion:

- When God sees people—He sees them according to their destinies, not according to their problems! (*He sees songs, poetry, books, paintings, business strategies, inventions, solutions, cures for diseases, etc.*)!!!
- Father’s goal for us—that we would see as He sees—that nothing is impossible for those who believe (Matt. 19:26; Mark 9:23)
- Biblical Hx proves it didn’t matter to God where people were from, what they had done, or who they used to be—to be used mightily by God.

Abraham (<i>old</i>)	Elijah (<i>suicidal</i>)	Joseph (<i>abused</i>)
Job (<i>bankrupt</i>)	Moses (<i>couldn’t speak</i>)	Gideon (<i>paranoid</i>)
Rahab (<i>prostitute</i>)	Woman/well (<i>divorced</i>)	Noah (<i>substance abuse</i>)
Jeremiah (<i>too young</i>)	Jacob (<i>liar/cheat</i>)	David (<i>adultery/murder</i>)
Jonah (<i>coward</i>)	Naomi (<i>penniless widow</i>)	Peter (<i>denied Jesus 3x</i>)
Martha (<i>paranoid</i>)	Zaccheus (<i>corrupt</i>)	The 12 (<i>divided/faithless</i>)
Paul (<i>religious terrorist/hated Xians & persecuted them</i>)		

Throughout history God has used FLAWED PEOPLE to share HOPE to a FLAWED WORLD. He didn’t call the equipped—He equipped the called. Look past the past—in your city, nation, your own life—renewal is here!