

OLD TESTAMENT
READINGS &
DEVOTIONALS

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VOLUME 10

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Reading: Ezekiel 1

“And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.”
Ezekiel 1:26 (AKJV)

It forms the most satisfying consideration to the breast of the faithful, that every event and every providence concerning the people of God is as much directed, arranged, and determined, as the purposes of redemption themselves. The covenant is “a covenant ordered in all things, and sure.”¹ He who hath undertaken and completed salvation for them, hath no less secured the means that shall infallibly accomplish the end: and all things, how unpromising so ever on the first view, shall work together for good to them that love God.² When the Holy Spirit would graciously lead the Church into the proper apprehension of this great truth, the Prophet is directed to the contemplation of a vision by the river *Chebar*, which opened before him. There were living creatures moving in a straight direction upon wheels, wheel within wheel, attended with a noise and a voice; hereby intimating, as it should seem, that the

government of everything, in the kingdom of providence and grace, was regulated by an unerring standard; and that the prophet's mind might farther understand the vision, he was led to see, above the whole, the likeness of a throne, and the appearance of the likeness of a man upon it. Nothing could be more gracious, by way of teaching the Church that the government of all things is in the hand of Jesus, and the most minute circumstances of his people subject to his control. Amidst numberless improvements to be made of this doctrine, there is one, my soul, which, in the exercises of thy warfare, thou wilt find perpetual occasion to apply: for what can be more blessed than to contemplate this government of thy Jesus, as continually exercised in his sin preventing providences, whereby the Lord keeps back his people from presumptuous transgressions? How often, how very often, might a child of God discover those sweet restraints of the Lord, when hedging up his way with thorns, that he may not find his paths? How often hath some outward affliction, or inward sorrow, sickness in ourselves, or death in our houses, acted in a way of prevention to this end? There is a great variety of ways, by which indwelling corruptions would manifest themselves, and break forth in their several disorders, but for restraining grace. What a beautiful instance was that of David, in the case of *Nabal*, and what a gracious sentiment to this amount the Psalmist expressed upon it! When Abigail came, in the seasonable moment to check his anger, David discerned the Divine hand in the appointment, and brake out into a devout acknowledgment: "Blessed be the Lord, and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, that hath kept me this day from shedding blood."³ And who shall say, amidst the ten thousand occurrences of life, what multitudes of instances to the same purport are going on, to restrain the children of God from the commission of evil. Oh! how blessed it is to see Jesus as well in providence as grace, and, like the Prophet, to keep an eye to that

throne, and to see one like the Son of man sitting upon it, regulating and ordering all things for his own glory, and the salvation of his people. Precious Jesus! keep me in the hour, and from the power of temptation. Do thou order my steps by thy word, so shall no iniquity have dominion over me. (Hawker, The Poor Man's Evening Portion, Jan 31)

Footnotes:

1. 2 Samuel 23:5.
2. Romans 8:28.
3. 1 Samuel 25:32-33.

2

Reading: Ezekiel 2-3

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

Are there no exceptions? No, not one. Even the favored 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 unhal-
lowed 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 Savior'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 Savior's precious blood is the universal solvent, and me, even me, it will effectually soften, till my heart melts as wax before the fire. (Spurgeon, Eve, Apr 28)

3

Reading: Ezekiel 4

There is somewhat very striking in the ministry of *Ezekiel*, different from that of other Prophets for the most part. He was not only to deliver God's truths by word of mouth: but also to represent by lively images the signification. *Jeremiah* wore a yoke of wood, constantly about him, in order to be a living testimony of the people's bondage; but *Ezekiel* constantly preached by type, in a great variety of ways. (Hawker, Poor Man's Old Testament Commentary: Ezekiel-Malachi, 15)

4

Reading: Ezekiel 5

Reader! let us in the perusal of this Chapter, observe the gracious mercy of a Covenant God, who in the midst of judgments, will have his people regard his love. Hence the Prophet shall be commissioned to preach to them, as well by type as sermon, to shew the people, that, though rebellious children, they are not forgotten by him. So that though the man of God is to cause the razor to pass upon his head, and the hair is partly to be burnt, and partly divided with the knife, and partly scattered to the wind: to intimate the separation for a time of the people from their glorious head; yet still in covenant-relations, the Lord will not finally cast away his people whom he foreknew, though he will reprove them for their wickedness.

Reader! we shall find a sweet subject of consolation from the contents of this Chapter, in hearing how Christ comforts his Church under a similar similitude. *Thine head upon thee*, saith Jesus, *is like Carmel; and the hair of thine head like purple; the king is held in the galleries. How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!*¹ And when we behold Jesus, as the Head of his body the Church; and

the hair intimating the innumerable members which grow upon him; Jesus is held by virtue of this union, in the galleries of covenant grace, and the purple vesture of his blood becomes the token of cleansing from all sin. Though by sin and departure from him, the children of God lose sight of their privileges; yet his grace and mercy remains the same: *though we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself.*² Precious Redeemer! how blessed is it to see our safety and security in thee. Truly Lord, all thy redeemed may say with one of old, and in reference to every individual of thy family, *though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.*³ (Hawker, Poor Man's Old Testament Commentary: Ezekiel-Malachi, 20–21)

Footnotes:

1. Song of Songs / Solomon 7:5-6.
2. 2 Timothy 2:13.
3. Psalm 37:24.

5

Reading: Ezekiel 6

“Yet I will leave a remnant when you are scattered among the nations, for throughout the countries there will be some of you who will escape the sword.” Ezekiel 6:8

Reader! do not too hastily pass away from this blessed verse. Behold in it the grace and faithfulness of Jehovah! Recollect what one of the Prophets was commanded to say: and one of the Apostles has fully confirmed. *Though thy people Israel (said Isaiah) be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return.*¹ And Reader! do not overlook another grand thing here promised, namely, this remnant is the Lord’s leaving. Yes! no merit, no foresight, no labor of theirs, in the least contributing to this great salvation. It is very blessed to see our mercies: and doubly blessed when we can trace them to their source and behold the same Almighty hands which laid the foundation, finishing it also in grace.² And Reader! I pray you yet further to observe, the Lord’s design in all this, namely, that the Church may have some that shall escape the general ruin. And what is the cause, but that Jesus may be glorified in his Church, in his redeemed. What would the Lord do for his great name, if the Lord’s cause was to be

totally lost in the ruin of his people? How would the great head of his Church be glorified, if any of the members of his body perished? Precious, Precious Lord Jesus! how blessed is it to find our safety in thee!³ (Hawker, Poor Man's Old Testament Commentary: Ezekiel-Malachi, 22)

Footnotes:

1. Isaiah 10:22; Romans 9:27.
2. Zechariah 4:9.
3. Joshua 7:8-9; Exodus 32:11-14; Numbers 14:11-21.