2Thess #143;

Turn back to GOD and HE will remove the thorns in your path.

Open back up in OT – Ezekiel chapter two RF.

Please keep the whole Trump family in prayer – it is a long walk between now and the end of January.

Perhaps we have a reprieve for America if we can get into 2025 with no major dark events.

As we open today - let me go over the historical context on Ezekiel.

The first two chapters in the original language have no chapter break – it is all one letter.

Ezekiel was from the Levitical line of priests and because of Babylonian captivity he was used by God as a prophet.

His ministry begins around 592 BC when Babylon was already dominating the landscape of the Norther kingdom of Israel.

Jeremiah was busy prophesizing in the Southern kingdom and that would fall several years later under Babylon pressure.

Basically, at this historic point Egypt was the only firewall for Israel and they could not hold up under the Babylonian military power.

Ezkiel whose name means “God strengthens” became a captive under Nebuchadnezzar. He was kept in a house near the Chebar river which is one of several rivers that flows into the Euphrates River. It is located in or around modern-day Iraq.

Now Ezekiel actually has even more prophetic value about the end times than the book of Daniel. There are six prophetic visions in Ezekiel that really align not only with prophecy but many historic events.

Ezekiel does bring greater hope in the overall picture than Jeremiah who spoke of great pain and sorrow…both men held truth and spoke what GOD the HS put upon their hearts.

/Part of Ezekiel’s 6 visions relate to how Israel (both kingdoms), incorporated themselves into Babylonian culture and religious rituals. This would be the final defiant act that Israel will lose itself in reference to accurately handling the WORD and remaining a pure Levitical order. The temple itself and worship of Yahweh would be forever skewed and twisted toward a false and evil agenda. This may have been the last thorn bush they brought upon themselves.\

There are some interesting similarities or typologies between Ezekiel and the humanity of Jesus Christ.

/Two phrases used repeatedly in Ezekiel are – “*son of man*” and “*Then they will know that I am the LORD*." SON OF MAN used in NT teaching speaking about the person of Christ. The typology here is that like the humanity of Christ, Ezekiel is dwelling in a religious system that is opposite of the plan of GOD. Jesus was dealing with the Sanhedrin and a captive system under Roman rule. Ezekiel is under the rule of Babylon (BAAL system) and is captive as well.\

Ezekiel like our Lord Jesus Christ is proclaiming GOD is here, GOD is calling you to repentance. Both Ezekiel and Jesus were sent to awaken the nation of Israel first and then bring forth the truth of BD to a lost and dying world.

The ancient Hebrew text shows us the longest call to duty for any OT prophet.

God always called the prophet first and then went over the strategy for that prophet to follow.

In chapter one we see an incredible presentation of angelic presence, it is the first portion of the call in a divine vision for Ezekiel.

Ezk 2:1 Then He said to me, “Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you.”

[Eze 2:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/eze/2/2/s_804002) And as He spoke to me the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet; and I heard *Him* speaking to me.

The original Hebrew uses a term that means to either enter or walk alongside or fall upon.

[/Eze 2:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/eze/2/3/s_804003) Then He said to me, **“Son of man, I am sending you to the sons of Israel, to a rebellious people** who have rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have revolted against Me to this very day.

Son of Adam (Heb), in the NT - SON of man, points to the humanity of Christ. The doctrine of the hypostatic union is only ever used to point to TLJC.\

[Eze 2:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/eze/2/4/s_804004) “So I am sending you to those who are impudent and obstinate children, and you shall say to them, ‘This is what the Lord GOD says:’

The original Hebrew points to hardness of heart – a build up of scar tissue from repetitive negative decisions.

Notice no matter how far every generation of Israel pushed away from GOD – HE still considered them children.

There is a call back toward repentance not for salvation again. The true history of Israel is more rebellion than compliant toward GOD – more apostate then in fellowship with GOD.

Yet salvation is not the issue.

 REPEAT

[/Eze 2:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/eze/2/5/s_804005) “As for them, whether they **listen** (*šāmaʿ*)or not—for they are a rebellious house—**they will know that a prophet has been among them**.

To pay close attention and then OBEY! God allows free will to be the deciding factor – but HE always makes the teacher or prophet available for HIS children.\

SHAW-MAY, is in the Qal stem - which means to diligently focus upon and to follow closely and then obey.

God will always place men in positions of teacher and church leaders for HIS people. Yet it will come down to your own free will choice to find the right one.

If you rely on teachers who make you feel good all the time and what they teach varies from the scripture, in the end, you are the one responsible!

/Jer 3:15 “Then **I will give you shepherds after My own heart,** who will feed you knowledge and understanding.

Eph 4:11 And He gave some *as* apostles, some *as* prophets, some *as* evangelists, some *as* **pastors and teachers,**

(Jer 23:4, Jhn 21:15-17, 1Pet 5:2) \

Many Christians enter a tangled web of thorns and thistles because they want their ears tickled.

Or they want a simple solution for spirituality, so they go to the church down the road.

The church mom and dad went too.

Yet the most important decision you make alongside of who you will marry - is choosing a pastor-teacher.

[/Eze 2:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/eze/2/6/s_804006) “And as for you, son of man, you are not to fear them nor fear their words, **though thistles and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions**; you are not to fear their words nor be dismayed at their presence, since they are a rebellious house.

The bites of a scorpion in the ancient world were extremely painful and at times deadly! Yet GOD will protect Ezekiel from angry Israelites and even Babylonian authorities.\

The people of Israel quickly fell in love with many aspects of Babylonian culture and as captives it became easy to go along and get along.

Even in enemy territory the Bel has to stand fast in truth.

/The measure of success in God's work is not always in terms of the amount and overwhelming visible response to HIS message. Success is to be measured in terms of our obedience to the words, our compliance or efforts toward HIS commands. Our true interest in the will of God regardless of the visible results. Real relationships are built on a true interest in getting to know the other person and complying to certain needs or standards they may have.\

Marriage is built on these basic building blocks, alongside of God’s word woven into that relationship.

Both parties weaving this together is a winning combination.

That is what makes a strong fabric and a key witness for the angelic conflict.

 REPEAT

This is what Bels do when they take the WORD of God serious and begin a relationship with the mind of Christ.

/Ezekiel is dealing with collateral damage, pointing us to the principle of blessing by association or cursing by association. The thorns and thistles Israel brought upon themselves, touched the lives of many Israelites who had stayed faithful to Yahweh. God will protect the positive Bel and give opportunity for growth during a curse by association. Ezekiel, Daniel, Jeremiah, Joseph - were all sterling examples of this wall of fire GOD places upon positive Believers.\

Folks… we live in a flawed system, a satanic ideology all around us – bumping into an OSN everywhere we go.

We have to have the endurance and not lose faith.

It is the exact principle the Apostle Paul taught in the church at Corinth;

/1Cor 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except *something* **common to mankind; and God is faithful,** so **He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able**, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, **so that you will be able to endure it**.\

Never assume - even in our own failures and when we tangle ourselves into thorns and thistles – that GOD is not prepared to help guide you through it.

Remember God’s plan and HIS thinking are not from human viewpoint.

So HIS solution may not align with how you are thinking it will!

If you are dealing with self-induced misery, first, accept the responsibility! Then turn toward the justice system of GOD and then get into a serious diet of BD.

You may be in need of a consistent soul cleansing – that is the repentance we should live by. Not shame, guilt and works programs.

 REPEAT

Be very careful how you understand repentance – it is not religious punishment and humiliation.

/Eph 6:13 Therefore, **take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist on the evil day**, and having done everything, **to stand firm**.

When we are placed in the adversity and we know we have been faithful to GOD, stand firm…apply the doctrine you have.\

I can tell you - I get convicted by the SPIRIT when I study some of the prophets of the OT, men like Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezekiel. Even the apostles and all they suffered.

They were called to be the leaders, the teachers and remain faithful in the midst of great evil and undeserved suffering.

/2Tim 4:2 **preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season**; correct, rebuke, *and* exhort, with great patience and instruction.

It does not matter if people are offended by truth or squirm away from difficult principles – the pastor is called to teach with academic honesty.\

Teach with a firm hand and compassion in heart.

The pastor is called to be tough on some lessons and softer on others.

The pastor has to listen to God the HS while studying and preparing notes.

[Eze 2:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/eze/2/7/s_804007) “But you shall speak My words to them whether they listen or not, for they are rebellious.

[/Eze 2:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/eze/2/8/s_804008) “Now you, son of man, listen to what I am speaking to you; do not be rebellious like that rebellious house. **Open your mouth wide and eat what I am giving you**.”

This is the meaning of metabolizing doctrine, digesting the word as a steady diet. It has to be fully accepted and mixed with faith. As GOD the HS inspires the teacher, so too does the student have to digest in similar fashion.\

This is a supernatural chain of command.

The right thing done in the right way…matters!

This has to be followed and respected by everyone involved, starting with the teacher.

If you struggle respecting authority you will be a problematic student of the word of GOD, no matter who the teacher is.

Humility is teachability!

[Eze 2:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/eze/2/9/s_804009) Then I looked, and behold, a hand was extended to me; and behold, a scroll *was* in it.

[/Eze 2:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/eze/2/10/s_804010) When He spread it out before me, **it was written on the front and back, and written on it were songs of mourning, sighing, and woe**.

In ancient scrolls it was never a double- sided document. This is believed to be a supernatural set of lessons – highlighting the sins of Israel and the solutions and doctrines to back it all up!\

There is personal responsibility that can bring in sighs and woes, as we learn of our own negative volition and what that may bring upon us.

Until you take responsibility for your own decisions and walk with GOD, you will lack true spiritual growth.

The Bible is extremely clear about personal responsibility – with freedom comes great responsibility.

GOD gives us instruction and guidance yet HE will not force it upon anyone.

When we reject HIS plans and HIS word and do things our own way – we are doing as the original man and woman in the garden – acting as our own little gods.

Very similar to the fallen angels and their leader Satan.

 REPEAT

Let me close with good scriptures pointing to this exact principle.

/Num 33:55 But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from you, then it will come about that those whom **you let remain of them *will be* like thorns in your eyes and like pricks in your sides, and they will trouble you in the land in which you live**. 56 And just **as I plan to do to them, I will do to you.**’”\

The seeds of Satan were never fully destroyed in the promised land! Therefore, Israel would always have attacks and temptations all around them.