

SOUL FOOD

July 8, 2017

Ezekiel 11:14-21 God Is Always Up to Something Good

After reading this chapter of Ezekiel one might question the title of this devotional. Look at what just happened. Pelatiah the son of Benaiah was struck dead by God. To add to the irony of this situation Pelatiah's name means, "The Lord delivers." Benaiah's name means, "The Lord builds." Even Ezekiel was greatly perplexed and wondered if God had forgotten His covenant with Israel: *Will you make a full end of the remnant of Israel?*

In the midst of what seems like total darkness, God gives a great message and promise of hope. Even in the midst of those who are left in Judah baiting the exiles, "Go far from the Lord..." God gives a powerful glimpse into His glorious plans. God informed Ezekiel and His faithful remnant that He was going to do a work of revival and renewal among them. How was God going to do that?

First of all, God reminds the exiles that even though they were foreigners in a land not their own, He has been a sanctuary to them for a while, or literally, "in small measure." The sanctuary of which God is speaking is not a building or a geographical locale. No, our sanctuary is God Himself. God is our refuge and our hiding place. God is the One from whom we receive refreshment, renewal, and protection. As believers we have the assurance that no matter where we are, no matter what we are going through, God is our sanctuary and there we can and must worship and serve Him. *Have you ever lived as if you were totally alone and totally dependent only on your own resources?*

God then reminds the exiles that Israel is their land and that He will return them there from where they have been scattered. Today, believers are scattered all over the world. Yet, we too will be returned to the New Earth after Jesus returns and we will dwell in one place, that place not built by human hands. We must live daily in the light of this glorious promise. Jesus' blood seals this promise.

Lastly, God is going to do a work of transformation in the hearts of His people. He is going to remove their hearts of stone and replace them with new hearts that are malleable in the hands of His Spirit. They will have hearts that know God's Law and that are motivated by His glory and pleasure. This work of God's Spirit is necessary so that we can truly walk in God's commands and pursue true obedience. As God's Word states in the New Testament, "Apart from faith it is impossible to please God." The work of the gospel is to bring about the obedience of faith. This is part and parcel of the great work that God is always doing. Don't despise God's discipline, which is unpleasant for a season. Keep the end in view. Learn to say, "Father, I can't wait to see what you are going to do with this one!"