

Monday, October 9, 2017 - Day 281 – Ezekiel 23-24, Psalm 80, Revelation 3

Of the titles that are used for Jesus in the New Testament, Son of Man is our Lord's favorite designation for Himself. It appears on His lips more often than any other title, including Lord and Christ. Biblical scholars have long considered the significance of this in light of the Old Testament, and most suggest that the main reason Jesus used this title was to identify Himself as the one to whom the Father would deliver an everlasting kingdom, however, that may not be the sole reason He preferred that title. It's noted that the Lord often addresses the prophet Ezekiel as "son of man." In fact, God uses the title for him in today's passage. Ezekiel was a prophet and a "son of man," so it could be that Jesus also used Son of Man to reveal His prophetic office. After all, the incarnate Word of God preached God's Word to His disciples just as Ezekiel preached God's Word to his generation.

Those whom the Lord calls to ministry often must give up things that they would ordinarily hold dear. Jesus was called to lay down His life and suffer the divine curse on sin. Ezekiel suffered the loss of his wife. God came to the prophet and told him his wife was going to die but that he should not engage in any of the customary mourning practices, which would have involved wearing sackcloth, lying on the ground, throwing ashes on one's head, and so on. Instead, he was to don a turban, that is, wear the garments of celebration (Ezek. 24:15–18). This was a great loss indeed to the prophet, for the Lord refers to her as the delight of Ezekiel's eyes. To not mourn for her would be a great sacrifice for him and cause great pain to his heart in addition to her death.

Such a death seems to be a drastic, almost "desperate" step for the Lord to take to get His point across. In reality, God never finds Himself in a desperate situation. But from a human perspective, the Israel's refusal to believe that the Lord would let Jerusalem fall was a desperate situation, and desperate times required desperate measures. The death of Ezekiel's wife (whom brought him delight) foreshadowed the loss of the temple, which was the delight of the Jews. God strove to make His intent clear so that the people would have no excuse. Despite the hardship in the loss of Ezekiel's wife and temple, however, all would be for the good of Israel. Through the trouble, the people would come to know that He is the Lord.

This passage from Ezekiel illustrates that God is working for the ultimate good of His people even in tragedy. Sometimes, achieving the ultimate good means suffering in the short term, but one day we will see that the suffering was worth it. The loss of Ezekiel's wife meant some could look back after Jerusalem's fall and see that the Lord in whose name the prophet spoke had been right all along. That would lead to them to trust Him for salvation.

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