



Prophet Prophesying Eternal Life



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Often times, people tend to avoid reading the Old Testament claiming that it's full of symbols and hard to understand. However, one must delve into the book and meditate on much of the meaning. Reading the Old Testament requires effort, which makes it rewarding when one finally understands it. The Holy Book of Ezekiel is a book that requires such effort in its reading, yet the beauty of the meanings is one of the best in the Holy Bible.

Not much is given to us regarding Ezekiel the prophet's background; however, we do know that he was a priest, the son of Buzi, and that he lived in the land of the Chaldeans. From the date given (King Jehoiachin's 5th year of captivity), it seems that Ezekiel must have been deported from Judah to Babylon (he is the first prophet of the captivity) at the same time Daniel was, 604 BC. It is also possible that he knew Daniel, or at least knew of him, for Ezekiel the prophet mentions him in the Book of Ezekiel 14:14, 20, and 28:3. Lastly, we know that Ezekiel was married, for in Ezekiel chapter 24, God prohibits him from mourning after his spouse's death. As a priest, Ezekiel likely would have been well trained in the Holy Scriptures and in the customs of the Temple, knowledge that he put to good use in this Book. He also very likely understood the political hierarchy of Judah, as he is able to name the leaders and elders of Judah in his visions.

The Holy Book of Ezekiel is truly one of the most remarkable in the Holy Bible, for in it, we receive probably the most vivid image of the glory of God. The Book in fact starts with a vision Ezekiel saw describing God's glory:

As I looked, behold a stormy wind out of the north, and a great cloud, with brightness round about it, and fire flashing



Ezekiel

forth continually, and in the midst of the fire, as it were gleaming bronze. And from the midst of it came the likeness of four living creatures (Ezek 1:4-5).

These same four living creatures are the same as the ones described in the Book of Revelations by St. John the beloved, which represent our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Through further visions that God reveals to Ezekiel the prophet, we see that the failure of the people of Israel to follow in God's way will lead to the Gentiles being saved. This is shown when Ezekiel sees the glory of God departing from the Temple in Jerusalem, leaving the inner court and moving to the outer court, and then rising and moving out to the Mount of Olives, and

rising up from there. Of course, this prophecy was fulfilled when our Lord moved out of the temple, down across the Kidron Valley, up the side of the Mount of Olives, and into the Garden of Gethsemane. And later, after the Crucifixion and the Glorious Resurrection, He ascended from that mountain into glory. Of course, after the Glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, all people, not just the Hebrews could obtain eternal life.

The literal interpretation of the Holy Book of Ezekiel is about God's restoration of Israel; however, one can apply the entire story to him/her. Just as God intends to restore Israel, so does He for us as His children. One can therefore gain much spiritual benefit from a Book such as this one even though at first, one may think that it is an ancient story that does not apply to us nowadays. ✚

References:

<http://www.pbc.org/dp/stedman/adventure/0226.html>

<http://www.gcfweb.org/institute/prophet/ezekiel.html>



Wall-painting covering the western semi-dome (from Dair Al-Suryan) representing in its center The Annunciation amidst four prophets. The right side of the Blessed Virgin Mary shows Isaiah and Moses with the burning bush above his head (Exodus 3:2-6), illustrated in figure of a red edging surrounding a two branched tree. On the left side of the Archangel Gabriel, the two others. Ezekiel and Daniel are at the extremity of this side. Each prophet is holding a scroll, in which a verse from his prophecy is written in Coptic, concerning the Annunciation:

***Isaiah 7:14** - "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."*

***Ezekiel 44:2** - "... and the Lord said to me, "This gate will stay closed and will never be opened. No human being is allowed to use it, because I, the Lord God of Israel, have entered through it. It is to remain closed."*

***Daniel 2:34, 35-45** "... While you were looking at it, a great stone broke loose from a cliff without anyone touching it, ..."*

All this expresses and proves the Incarnation and also the perpetual virginity of the Blessed Virgin St Mary. The Coptic artist assembled the ancient prefigurations, the promises with their accomplishment and realization. The fulfillment of the Divine purpose realizes the union of the two Testaments.