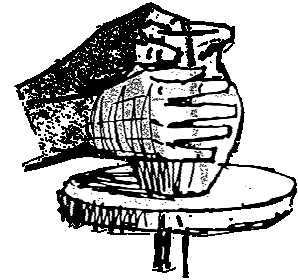


His Workmanship: Westside

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.”
—Ephesians 2:10



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Isaiah 64:8

Ezekiel: Comfortable Jews and Comfortable Christians, by Michael Luke

Let's review the background early in the book of Ezekiel: Ten thousand Jews were captured by the Babylonians and carried into captivity 1,000 miles away. Ezekiel was one of the captives and was God's prophet in Babylon. At approximately the same time, Jeremiah was God's prophet in Jerusalem. The city of Jerusalem was virtually unharmed by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and he had installed a man named Zedekiah as a puppet king in Jerusalem. Optimism was running high that Jerusalem and Judah would soon be delivered and restored to its former glory. False prophets were responsible for this optimism.

The people didn't like the message of God as delivered by Jeremiah and Ezekiel, so they looked for people who would say what they wanted to hear. They lived fast and loose and refused the call of God's voice to repentance and restoration. They believed that everything was going to be OK just like it was—they didn't believe that God would personally call them to task for what they were doing. Our churches are full of people like that today.

They see everything through the lenses of their sinfulness and rebellion. They've turned away from God's true picture of things and have reinvented everything according to their own warped standards. They are primarily concerned with feeling comfortable instead of being faithful in following Christ. They're living fast and loose and are refusing to hear God's voice calling them to repentance and then restoration. They don't believe that God will personally hold them accountable for what they are doing.

The problem is that they have accepted falsehoods as opposed to accepting the truth. False prophets were declaring a message contrary to God's message. They didn't want to change their behavior so they changed the message. In order to understand God's truth, you have to be obedient to God's will. Leaders who falsely claimed to care about the needs of the people only cared about their own interests. Again, unwillingness to change their behavior made them put forth a false front. The people accepted and even embraced the falsehoods. They wanted to believe every-

thing was going to be okay just the way it was. They were unwilling to change behavior, which produced the acceptance of false beliefs.

The prophet Samuel warned a disobedient King Saul, *“For rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has rejected you as king,”* 1 Sam 15:23. Because some don't want to change their behavior, they ignore the truth and practice falsehoods. Let's look at some of these falsehoods.

I. We've got plenty of time, Ezek 12.

God assigned Ezekiel the task of presenting two dramas in a one-man play format that reminded the Jews that His promise of punishment and destruction would happen

A. First drama – 12:1-16. Ezekiel was to pack a bag like leaving for exile, place it some distance from his house. This was a sign that the leaders of Israel were planning on abandoning the people and fleeing for their own lives. Then, he was to dig a hole in the wall of his house—representing that Nebuchadnezzar would break down the walls of Jerusalem. Ezekiel

continued on p. 2

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves,” Matthew 7:15

was then to recover the bag, go back through the hole in the wall to the inside, and leave again through the hole. At that time, only a part of the Jews were in exile, but Ezekiel was warning that all the Jews would either be exiled to Babylon or scattered throughout the Babylonian Empire.

B. Second drama – 12:17-28. Ezekiel was to consume his bread and water shaking and trembling. This signified that food and drink would be difficult to find and that the people would have great fear when they were seized. Every meal could their last.

C. Two lies. The problem was that the false prophets were declaring two completely different scenarios: First, they falsely said that everything was fine back in Jerusalem: *“The days drag on and every vision comes to nothing and is not fulfilled,”* 12:27. But God gave Ezekiel a new proverb to share with the people, *“The days are near when every vision will be fulfilled,”* 12:23. Second, they falsely said that, yes, the things Ezekiel were prophesying would come true, but not in their lifetime. In reality, the prophecies would be fulfilled soon, during their lives.

D. Not now. The lie is that we have plenty of time to continue to live the way we’re living. *“First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, ‘Where is this “coming” he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation,’”* 2 Pet 3:3-4. The saddest words at the judgment will be, “I thought I had more time.” *“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slow-*

ness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare,” 2 Pet 3:8-10.

II. We Can Play with the Truth, Ezekiel

13. The problem was the false teachings of the false prophets. They were easy to believe because they were easy to follow. Jesus warned that the way for Christians was not broad and easy, but narrow and difficult. These false prophets were compared to several things: 1) wild animals that lived as scavengers in the deserted ruins of the land; 2) workmen who built something that would never last—they had whitewashed a weak wall to make it look sturdy. A true prophet tells people what they need to hear. A false prophet only tells them what they want to hear. *“In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, Who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His kingdom, I give you this charge:*

Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not endure sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths,” 2 Tim 4:1-4. False prophets give testimony that is supposed to be from God; but God has not spoken to them nor called them. Even if the message be true to God’s Word, there are people who will take the truth and twist it until it makes them feel comfortable. *“Have you ever seen a pet rock? I met one some years ago. An American student in Cambridge was not allowed to keep a dog or cat in*

college, so he kept a smoothly polished rock instead. It sat on his bedside table where he could stoke it, especially when he felt lonely and far from home. He said it gave him a secure feeling. Have you ever seen a pet Bible? People do keep Bibles as pets, and they usually sit on their bedside tables, too. Every night they fondle its pages, reading a favorite verse or two to comfort and relax them before they go to sleep. By this means, they think they are maintaining a relationship with God. Unfortunately, for all the practical difference it make to their lives, they might just as well stroke a rock as the leather of their Bible,” D. Roy Clements, [Faithful Living in a Faithless World](#). At the time of the exile, the Jews tended to treat the scriptures in that way. That was one of the reasons the judgment of God was coming upon them so surely. Yet they were unaware of God’s impending judgment. They wanted the comfort and security of the prophetic word without having to face up to its disturbing challenge to their lifestyle. So they found way of controlling that word, muzzling its bark, domesticating it. Jesus said the devil was liar and the father of all lies. If we practice falsehood, we serve the devil, not Christ.

III. We Can Place with the Team.

We tend to treat our faith as if we think we’re all doing well if the coach or just some of the team is doing well—innocence by association. The Jews in captivity felt that way. Daniel was faithful in his captivity, so they thought they could ride on his coattails. Those who did recognize that they would be held accountable for their own lack of faithfulness tried to shift the blame to their leaders: They are not doing their jobs, so it’s okay if we don’t do ours.”

continued on p. 3



Let your faith be seen in 2014
 "I rejoice to see your good order
 and the steadfastness of your faith
 in Christ." —Colossians 2:5

Comfortable Christians, from p. 2 "If Or, "If we only had leaders like Job and Noah." Daniel, Job, and Noah, named in Ezek 14, were admirable men—righteous and faithful. But we can't depend on someone else to pull us through; we're accountable for our own sin and rebellion. In Jesus's day, the Jews thought that because they had Abraham as their father and Moses as their lawgiver, they were righteous before God. The Jewish people, their leaders, and their false prophets all professed to part of the people of God, but by their actions and attitudes they proved otherwise. In the same way, people come to church believing that as long as they are in the right place that practices the right beliefs everything will be fine for them.

God made a stinging comment concerning the people of Judah in captivity: He said that Ezekiel was to these people more like religious entertainment than someone who spoke the true word of God. "As for you, son of man, your countrymen are talking together about you by the walls and at the doors of the houses, saying to each other, 'Come and hear the message that has come from the LORD.' My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice,"

Discipleship Here At Home

Rejoice Michael Fryman, friend (physics tutor) of Michelle Franke, was baptized recently. Contact info: 859-954-0499

mfryman@myrail.mines.edu

mfranke@myrail.mines.edu 719-685-6987

Bemey Charo's friend in Neb, **Paul Alfaro**—recently returned to the Lord and needs prayers for strength

Tianna Smith is at Tunghai University in Taiwan this semester and would appreciate cards or email: +866-4-23590121 Office of Internat'l Education & Programs Xitun Dist., Taichung, Taiwan 40704 tmsmith@presby.edu

entertainment for their benefit vs. Biblical teaching that the purpose of gathering together is first to glorify God and then to encourage one another to serve the Lord in everyday matters.

God warned that judgment would come. He described four judgments:

1. Famine—14:12-14
2. Wild beasts in the land—14:15-16
3. The sword, war—14:17-18
4. Disease, which usually accompanies the other three—14:19-20

He warned that the judgments would happen in His time and at His pace, but that they would surely happen.

A North Carolina doctor, 28-year-old Mark Carver, was employed as assistant medical director at a major hospital. But he had never gone to medical school or even college. He forged documents to get the job as a doctor and knew enough medical jargon to fool everyone into thinking he was the real thing. He was sentenced to seven years in prison where he got to act like a prisoner. A true prophet does two things: 1) he points out sin (even hidden sin), and 2) he calls sinners to repentance.

"It's the condition of the person's heart that determines the response to the Lord's test," Warren Wiersbe. What are you trying to hide today? Can you honestly line up with God's Word in your relationship with Him?

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here and away

Jennifer Clayton, former member—severe lyme disease; heart, spine, neuro issues; in CA for 2-mo treatment, antibiotic picc line; plans to move back
Brittany Tope's mother—breast cancer back; grandmother—on dialysis

Hadderses' nephew **Zeke**—post-surgery fever; broken femur in KY; age 2

Christine Adams—recovering from ankle surgery with 14 pins & plate; homebound till Dec; see **Judy Sartin** to co-ordinate meals

Virginia Menard—ankle injury; knee pain

Eric Perry—intensive dental work for awhile

Sylvia Chapman, **Brett's** grandmother—third stage pancreatic cancer; chemo

Kenny Boyd's coworker **Kim Phillips**—asks our prayers for her heart condition

Giles Free—seizure from fall; confined at home, no driving for a few mos; scheduled for scan

Pat Wilkes—recovering from knee surgery; pain

Ed Fink—prostate cancer; current treatment for brain tumors. Undergoing chemo this month

Judy Sartin's son, **Dave Sartin**—colitis and severe depression; **Judy's** friend—**Vicky Keys**, to begin radiation mid-Nov after mastectomy

Larry Campbell asks for our prayers regarding excuses. Remember **Sandra Hampton** and

Elaine Isbell, who have returned to Christ and need our prayers and help for strength to walk with God

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; Addison Tope; Christian Harrod; Rocco Jr; Pat Wilkes, Tim Huelsman—asthma

Bill Dennis—adjusting pacemaker and meds

Nell Free—pacemaker, heart; back pain

Autumn Hadders—epilepsy; celiac disease

Jonathan Hadders—rheumatoid arthritis

Danielle Huelsman—vertigo, CV syndrome

Hannah Huelsman—polycythemia, thickening of blood; heart murmur, acid reflux, chest pain

Kirk Johnson—MS

Menards—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes, weak;

Virginia, macular degeneration; high BP

Sandra Perry—neuropathy from diabetes

Cheryl Reames—diverticulitis; fibromyalgia

Judy Sartin—spinal stenosis; arthritis

Judy and Mike Strand—hepatitis trtment

Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung weakness

Travel **Andreas Duval** has guard duty in

Wichita, KS, this weekend



Exposing current thoughts & trends

D.C. Council Looking for Hire Power, by Tony Perkins

As part of the so-called “Reproductive Health Nondiscrimination Act,” the Washington, DC, City Council is openly targeting religious and pro-life businesses and organizations with a measure similar to the HHS mandate—but even more expansive.

Not content with ordering groups to pay for abortion, DC is now trying to force those groups to hire people who support it, pushing for the final say on employees’ personal beliefs.

Under the bill, conservative groups would be forced to hire people who are openly hostile to their values—all under the guise of “tolerance.” The government would force businesses to hire the competition—or opposition.

Alliance Defending Freedom sent the city of DC a letter on behalf of Family Research Council and five other groups objecting to the measure, which also orders these same organizations to pay for abortion-on-demand in their health plans. “The government has no business forcing pro-life organizations to hire those who oppose their mission or to force any employer to pay for abortions,” said ADF’s Casey Mattox. “As the video of the committee hearing demonstrates, this is a cynical bill targeted at religious and other pro-life groups. It is illegal and doomed to defeat. The District should spare its taxpayers the expense of defending it.”

Ironically, the city is attempting all of this while the courts—like Florida middle US District Court Judge James Moody’s preliminary injunction last Wednesday against HHS enforcing its new tweaked, “accommodative” Hobby Lobby rules against religious organizations like Ave Maria University—are moving in the opposite direction and deciding, overwhelmingly, to protect conscience rights. For now, the best hope for religious organizations is in the House and Senate, which has oversight over the District of Columbia and absurd ideas like this one. With the elections just days away, it’s possible that this debate could be coming to a Congress near you. For the sake of the First Amendment, we hope Congress will decide for religious liberty.

“LORD, I pray your blessings upon my adult children. Bless the world of their hands in every way. **Give them a strong sense of purpose** so that they’re led to the right occupation and are always in the position that’s YOUR WILL FOR THEM. Speak to them about what they were created to do. Help them find great purpose in every job they do. Pour out Your Spirit upon them and help them to be ‘not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the LORD,’ Rm 12:11.”
—Stormie Omartian



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Larry Campbell (303) 246-8810
DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

info@thechurchingolden.com

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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Sunday morning

- **adult Bible class**, Lesson 4, “*The Potter and the Clay: the Disciple’s Transformation*,” Kenny Boyd

- **Sermon**, “Acceptance: What Price Is Too High?” Jim Reingrover

Sunday afternoon

- **worship, singing, Lord’s Supper, prayer.**

Wednesday night: Studies from Ezekiel.

Get materials for both Sunday and Wednesday adult classes from website under “Member Files.”