

## ***OUR GOD, THE GOD OF EXILES***

Well, its been about a week since my short visit in San Diego, and its about time for another message from the wilderness. Although I have been relatively busy attempting to prepare this place for winter, whenever it really arrives, I have still had time for study and contemplation, so here we go again:

My current study has been in the book of Ezekiel, which has been a slow process, attempting to interpret its primarily metaphorical nature in terms, which apply today. One particular theme has been coming to my attention: That both the world at large and the microcosm of Israel would know by observing the work of God in rescuing and restoring Israel that He in fact is the Lord their God. The phrase “that they will know that I am the Lord, their God” appears throughout the book, and always applies to an event which can only be ascribed to God.

Lets see if I can bring this even closer to home. Throughout the course of revelation God has manifested Himself in several manners, from direct revelation of His presence as in the case of Moses, through the prophets of power such as Elijah and Elisha, down to the poetic prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. This variation of God’s presence in the world continued through the person of Jesus and the apostles. Yet one theme has existed throughout these revelations, that our God is a God who reveals Himself most poignantly to exiles and outcasts, not only of the twelve tribes of Israel, but of the whole world.

*“And they will no longer be prey to the nations, and the beasts of the earth will not devour them; but they will live securely and no one will make them afraid. And I will establish for them a renowned planting place, and they will not again be victims of famine in the land, and they will not endure the insults of the nations anymore. **Then they will know that I, the Lord their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people,** declares the Lord God. (Ez. 34:29-30)*

God wanted both His elect and the rest of the world to recognize that they were beyond human rescue, and if not for His intervention, they would have been utterly destroyed. Today, God is still most visible when He intervenes in the lives of those who are the most lost and derelict, the exiles and outcasts of our world. Pretty churches full of pretty people are great, but the Lord we know doesn’t hang out there a lot. He is still looking for the lost in places where the lost are.

To those of you who are involved with ministries which reach out to the exiles of the world, and you know who you are; stay there. Don’t spend a moment’s time trying to make yourselves or your programs acceptable to the world at large. In fact, be cautious when you receive too many compliments from outside sources. One of the often overlooked sayings in the Beatitudes is ***“Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for in the same way their fathers used to treat the false prophets.” (Luke 6:26)*** When the leaders of the religious community of His day, the Pharisees and Saducees, approached Jesus, He soundly rejected their initial attempts to draw Him into their authority and under their control.

God wants you to know, by the power He exhibits in the places where the exiles and outcasts are and where you minister, that He is the Lord your God, and that He is with you. ***“As for you, you are My sheep, the sheep of My pasture, you are men, and I am your God.” (Ez34:31)***