

Subject: The View and the Vision

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Ezekial 3: 14-17

So the Spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, ~~in the heat~~ of my spirit; but the hand of the Lord was strong on me.

Then I came at the, of the captivity at Telabib, that dwelt by the river ~~of~~ Che-bar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among ~~t h e m~~ seven days. Verse 15

INTRODUCTION

- o **ARISTOCRACY** - Son of priest Buzi - Zadokite
King - Grandfather a slave, Father Daddy
King a veteran Preacher
- o **SETTING** - Ezekiel removed from the harshness of slavery
Martin bathing in Academia of the North -removed
- o **MYSTICS**- Phophecy fill with dreams and visiond
King articulated America's classic dream
- o **WRITERS** - The contents of their inspired minds are known
- o **EDUCATED** - Priestly tradition - Crozer Seminary - Boston Univ.

THE TENSIONS CREATED BY GOD'S CALL

- o Each of them had to leave their lofty heights of ecclesiastical elitism ~~a n d~~ wrestle with a descent to the valley of human need.

Babylon

- 5000 BC – means the gate of the gods
- City and region famous for its architecture, swinging gardens
- Ancient astrologers
- Predictions about the future
- King Hammurabi 1792-1750 B.C. codified the laws of Babylon and Sumeria – 7 foot stone pillar survives today

Judah

- Ruled by King Hezekiah
- Babylonian King Baladan II sent messengers to Jerusalem to ask for help in defence against the Assyrians
- Hezekiah welcomed the messengers and showed them the treasures of Israel's Temple and Palace. weapons, storehouse of spices

Prophet Isaiah

- Warned King Hezekiah that someday Babylon would invade Jerusalem and sent the people into exile including your sons which will be disgraced – Battle between Egypt and Babylonia
- People sinned, worshiped idol god, turned to foreign powers rather than to God in times of need and had not kept the holy laws. – Because of this, 'the glory of the Lord left the Temple'.

Nebucdnezzar

- 606 B.C. came to power and led an invasion of Judah
- Destroyed Jerusalem and Temple
- Stole its treasures
- Took its people into exile including King Jehoiachin and the elite Levite priest

Ezekiel is chosen as a prophet

- The Lord's glory leaves Jerusalem
- Ezekiel is chosen to be a prophet 8-11
- Messages of doom for Judah and Jerusalem
- Watchman and a shepherd 33.1
- Judah new future 35.1 –39

The Lord's glory returns to Judah and Jerusalem

- A new Temple
- Laws and rules for God's people
- Dividing the land

Tracking Ezekiel

- Aristocracy – Priest son of Buzi
 - Privileged
 - Mystic
 - Educated
 - Writer – could express the content of mind and experience
 - Member of the monastic club of spiritual exclusivity – far removed from the plight of his people
 - Received a Call from God
 - Wrestled with God over the call – Go to the River Chebar
-

CONTEXT – THE EVILS OF SEGREGATION IN AMERICA

Tracking Martin Luther King, Jr.

- Aristocracy – grandfather a slave, Daddy King a veteran Preacher, great grandfather on Mom's side, a Preacher
- Educated at Crozer Seminary and Boston University – bathing in academia of the North
- Writers – could express the content of their minds
- Philosopher – wrestling between Reinhold Niebuhr – Ethical Realism and Hegel's – Dialecticism
- Wrestling with the Call – Leave your world of Ideas, hallowed walls – Return from a desegregated North to Segregated South – to a system of hate and subjugation – What about my children

Tensions

- When you have submitted your life to the forces of destiny – to God's Will – Tensions are inevitable
- Tensions provide God His opportunity to become a participant

Prophet and a Priest – A Preacher and a Prophet

- Transmit messages from God
- Prophets were not recluse but students of current situations – they applied themselves to the task of asking for God’s message and direction
- Prophets had clear pictures of the View
- They were testators of the past experiences of God’s dealing with man
- They proclaimed – the message is from God ‘thus saith the Lord’

1. Uncompromising
2. Conscious of their ACCESS to the inner council of God
3. Conscious of the fact that They were God’ Agent
4. Outspoken critic of specific evils in the social order
5. Conscious of God’s authority and backing
6. Prayer and Consecrated Life styles molded their character

AMOS – that rustic country preacher from a small village of Tekoa

URBAN ISAIAH, from the King’s Court

HYPOTHESIS

God does not reveal the Vision for His people until after one has identified with the View

The vast Space between the View and the Vision defined

Ezekiel’s Mission ; Martin Luther King’s Mission and the

Mission of the Church Luke 4:15

VIEW

Reality – Social space - in the life of a people as perceived through their eyes, pain, wellness, joys, failures, needs/wants, denials, oppressions and cultural debris.

Children of Israel – in Captivity, stripped of freedom, privileged status demolished, depressed, Sacred Icons gone – could't sing; God had abandoned them, Hope had gone- All beliefs in Jehovah shattered

- They were in Rebellion

Negroes in America – Never rebelled against God but the systems that relegated them to second-class citizens.

VISIONS

- Visions are revealed by God
- Dreams are conceived by our wonderful imaginative capacities
- Visions are imported by God to His Chosen to enable them to know His mind and Will for His People
- Vision – a mental picture of a preferable future – portrait of God's Will and Power

HOLY SPIRIT Employed to connect the Vision to the prophets and to the well-being of God's People.

TWO OBSERVATIONS FROM THESE PROPHETS

- I. Sin is the root cause of the Condition – Denounces
- II. Morality and Righteousness takes precedence over civil rights
- III. Holy Spirit – Hebrew word 'ruach' wind, breath, spirit – contains the Lord's life-giving breath – Genesis 2.7 Employed to connect the Vision to the prophets and to the well-being of God's People.

- The REVERSE SIDE - whereas the mobile blacks have left behind

~~left behind~~

- A Stripped down, Socially disabled, nucleus of poor people labeled the underclass. This group generates a disproportionate share of the social pathology. The UNDERCLASS is not exclusively defined by poverty but by BEHAVIOR - Welfare recipients, males not participating in the work force, dropping out of school and single parent families.
- The hazard of the Civil Rights Movement was the isolation of the underclass.
- Michael Fix of the Urban Institute indicates that it raises the QUESTION - whether we are seeing the emergence of an American CASTE, a hard bottom class, which will signal the real problem for the 21st century.

ALTHOUGH THE BLACK LANDSCAPE HAS CHANGED

7000 BLACK ELECTED OFFICIALS

BRYANT GUMBEL IN THE MORNING

AND OPRAH WINFREY IN THE AFTERNOON

BILL COSBY AT FAMILY TIME P.M.

- 57% medium income - Black poverty rose 31% in 1986
Three times that of whites
- Black cause is less appealing - Old images of Birming-

Margaret Lake

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Love, Power + Justice - Central elements - View of social change - Reinhold Niebuhr + MLK, Jr.

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VISION - Under Your Watch

- Prayer elevates the Vision -
beyond success + personality
- Holy Spirit connects, permeates,
extracts ownership by

✓
✓

The Covenanted Community
of Saint

- Hope - wrapped up in Providential
PROMISE - keeps it alive

VIEW

Reality - in the life of people
Pain, welness, joy, failure,

Needs/wants - at stages of life

Social space, Denials, Oppression,
Cultural debt

Resources - available

Spiritual weakness

CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

- Capitvity, pride stripped, Privilege
status demolished
- Depressed - Icons Gone - Couldn't Sing
Frames of reference blocked out by
depression
- God had abandoned them - They
were in total Rebellion,
- Hope had gone - Anchor
Faith eroded - belief shattered

VIEW

1. Reality from the life struggle of the people -
Pain, Joy, Failures, enviRONS,
2. Market-based - Reality
 1. Segment the people
Children, Youth, Young Adults, Adults, Seniors -
3. Needs/Wants - What's Missing
Deprivations, denials, Abuse,
Alcoholism,
4. Resources Available to meet the
needs/wants