

How Ezekiel's Prophetic Fulfillment was realized

Homily for April 9, 2022

Saturday 5th week of Lent

Today's Old Testament reading is a wonderful example of the principle that the New Testament is concealed in the Old Testament and the Old Testament is revealed by the New. The Catechism speaks of the interrelationship between the Old and New Testaments this way:

Christians read the Old Testament in the light of Christ crucified and risen. Similarly the New Testament has to be read in the light of the Old. As an old saying put, the New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old is unveiled in the New.

Let me show how this applies to today's readings.

Remember Ezekiel was the prophet who lived at a time when many of the Jewish people were exiled in Babylon. This means that the Tribes of Israel had been scattered, beginning all the way back in 721 when the Northern Nation of Israel was overrun by the Assyrians, and now the southern Kingdom of Judah, around the year 601 had also been disbanded. In others words the people of God are in disarray, without a king, without a land and scattered throughout the Middle East.

Now with this in mind listen again to this passage:

I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from every quarter, and bring them to their own land. ²² I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all. Never again shall they be two nations, and never again shall they be divided into two kingdoms.

The division referred to here is at the time of the civil war during the reign of Rehoboam the son of Solomon. At that time the ten northern tribe seceded and the north became Israel and the south Judah. But here Ezekiel is looking to the day when there will be no longer any divisions, all the tribes will be reunited and there will be one king who rules over them. As a result of this rule we are told:

Then they shall be my people, and I will be their God.¹

My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes²

²⁶ I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will bless them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary among them forevermore.

¹ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#) (Eze 37:23). (1993). National Council of Churches of Christ.

² [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#) (Eze 37:24). (1993). National Council of Churches of Christ.

Now we can see how with the coming of the Lord Jesus, he gathered together the Twelve Tribes and was their gracious king. The land was no longer going to be a geographical territory but would become the place where the people of God gather, the Church. Within the Church, there would be a unity of teaching called the Magisterium that would allow the people of God to follow God's ordinances and statutes. And with these people the Lord would establish the New Covenant that would be reiterated every time the people of God gather for the New Covenant meal, the Eucharist. And then there are these beautiful and prophetic words:

27 My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.³

Here is foreshadowed that time when the tabernacle of the local church would be the dwelling place of Jesus on earth.

What this means for us beloved in Christ, is that we are part of the fulfillment Ezekiel wrote about 2600 years ago in ancient Babylon. We are part of the people referred to by St John in today's Gospel when he explains the meaning of Caiaphas' words this way:

He did not say this on his own, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation, ⁵² and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the dispersed children of God⁴

This includes us. As we enter into Holy Week may we have a renewed desire to hear the story of our salvation not as a story that happened 2000 years ago, but as the story that is happening for us now so we can be more deeply converted to the one who is our loving God and ruler; the blessed Jesus who has joined us to his everlasting family. May we realize afresh with humble thankfulness what it means to for his dwelling place to be here at St. Peter's. A dwelling place that establishes we are part of that community that has been gathered from all the earth, The One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

May you have a blessed Holy Week and discover ever more as you hear the story of salvation:

The New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old is unveiled in the New. And in your life and mine too.

³ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#) (Eze 37:26–27). (1993). National Council of Churches of Christ.

⁴ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#) (Jn 11:51–52). (1993). National Council of Churches of Christ.