

## The Transformation of the Elders

*Ezekiel 8:1-12*

*"In the sixth year, in the sixth month on the fifth day, while I was sitting in my house and the elders of Judah were sitting before me, the hand of the Sovereign LORD came upon me there. I looked, and I saw a figure like that of a man. From what appeared to be his waist down he was like fire, and from there up his appearance was as bright as glowing metal. He stretched out what looked like a hand and took me by the hair of my head. The Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and in visions of God he took me to Jerusalem, to the entrance to the north gate of the inner court, where the idol that provokes to jealousy stood. And there before me was the glory of the God of Israel, as in the vision I had seen in the plain. Then he said to me, "Son of man, look toward the north." So I looked, and in the entrance north of the gate of the altar I saw this idol of jealousy. And he said to me,*

*"Son of man, do you see what they are doing—the utterly detestable things the house of Israel is doing here, things that will drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see things that are even more detestable." Then he brought me to the entrance to the court. I looked, and I saw a hole in the wall. He said to me, "Son of man, now dig into the wall." So I dug into the wall and saw a doorway there. And he said to me, "Go in and see the wicked and detestable things they are doing here." So I went in and looked, and I saw portrayed all over the walls all kinds of crawling things and detestable animals and all the idols of the house of Israel. In front of them stood seventy elders of the house of Israel, and Jaazaniah son of Shaphan was standing among them. Each had a censer in his hand, and a fragrant cloud of incense was rising. He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the darkness, each at the shrine of his own idol? They say, 'The LORD does not see us; the LORD has forsaken the land.'"*



The elders represent many things through-out the scriptures but most importantly they represent the corporate representation of government leadership. They played a key part in the governing of Israel. There were 23 elders that sat in seats of judgment at the gate of every city. They made the decisions that we would go to a district or county court today. They assumed great power and authority. They also offered certain sacrifices in the temple. In Deuteronomy 31, Moses gave the law to the priests *and* the elders. Ruth and Boaz went in front of the elders to legally become married (Ruth 4:11). There were no documents to sign in that era, only the “witness” of the elders (example Judges 11:9-11). But as with all flesh, when mixed with power and money, it corrupts quickly.

These elders in Ezekiel 8:11 were doing terrible things. They were worshiping idols in the temple and the filthiness of their idolatry and adultery was bringing judgment on the whole land because they represented the people. These elders are like Babylon riding the beast, who ultimately make war with the lamb. The Holy of Holies was the portal into the very throne room of God. These elders were in there giving wicked counsel to the nation of Israel, they were inquiring of idols and Satanic spirits. They were seeking to run the whole Kingdom according to their own laws and traditions. The Lord shows Ezekiel the terrible things going on in the temple and in chapter 14 he goes into a long word from the Lord to them. He says idols have filled their hearts and yet they come to the prophet to hear the word of the Lord.

*Ezekiel 14: 1,14 "Some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat down in front of me. Then the word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, these men have set up idols in their hearts and put wicked stumbling blocks before their faces. Should I let them inquire of me at all? ...even if these three men—Noah, Daniel and Job—were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, declares the Sovereign LORD."*

He says their iniquity is so bad, that even if Daniel, Noah and Job were in the land, He could not save it. He would not even be able to save those three men’s children based on their righteousness, only they themselves. Heb. 11:7 says that Noah saved his entire household by faith at the time of the flood, but no one could save corporate Israel from their utter iniquity but Jesus! There is no one but Jesus that has the power and authority to cleanse the land of transgression. Daniel, Noah and Job were great men of God, they were considered at some points in linear time, His only friends and followers. But no man can save

the land, no matter how close they had been to the Lord, no matter how many great miracles they had performed. No man can pardon our transgression or give us life, only Jesus Himself.

In the New Testament the elders are also called the Sanhedrin. They used their thrones of power and authority to crucify Christ. They were seeking to save themselves. They did not want to lose their power, their great honor, or their position. They became so desperate that they paid false witnesses in order to manipulate the law to “justly” accuse and condemn the very Son of God to death. (Also in Luke 22:50-53)

*“But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest’s palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end. Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses...” Matthew 26:58-60*

However because of the great mercy of God, when Jesus put away the old creation and brought forth something new, He made the elders new too! One of the first thing we see in the book of Revelation when John sees into heaven, is the elders.

*Revelation 4:1-4 “After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.”*

Instead of pride, power and seeking to save, they fall off their thrones, take off their golden crowns and throw them at his feet. Instead of burning incense in their censers to idols, like in Ez 8:11, they have censers full of the prayers of the saints.

**Ezekiel 8:10-12** *“So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about. And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up. Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery?”*

**Revelation 5:8-9** *8And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;*

Their council and influence which was used in the Old Testament to cause the people to worship idols and used in the New Testament to crucify Christ, is now declaring the Lamb! They declare who is worthy to take the book and open the seals! The elders also knew that the Levitical priesthood had not provided anyone worthy to open the seals through the Law. They knew they had failed to open it. They knew that the Law could not do anything, but what was weak through the flesh, God accomplished through His risen Son!

*Romans 8:3-4 “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”*

That is why they were rejoicing to see that the Lamb could take the book and open it’s seals and singing, *“Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped him that liveth for ever and ever.” (Revelation 5:13-14)*

Next the Elders are the ones who reveal the mystery of those that have been redeemed from the earth.

*Revelation 7:13-17 "13And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."*

They are revealing the corporate new man, these Elders had seen and know the true realities of heaven!! The elders of the New Jerusalem are representing the people, the government of the land and they are changed!!!! Instead of crucifying the Lamb to keep their thrones and authority, instead of bringing idols into the Holy of Holies, instead they fall off of their thrones, their position, their "ministry" and throw their crowns down at the feet of Jesus. They are no longer motivated by selfishness in their ministering. They no longer are seeking power, honor and position, but the opposite of all that. Instead of making war with the Lamb, they are falling down and worshiping Him! Their judgment now, as they sit on their ruling thrones, is that no one is worthy of any glory, honor, power or strength but the Lamb!

*2 Corinthians 5:14-15 "because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."*

In Revelation chapter 11, they are rejoicing that the kingdoms of the earth are become the kingdoms of our God. What a difference than in Luke when their time was the hour of the power of darkness.

*Revelation 11:15-17 "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O LORD God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come: because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned."*

*Luke 22:53 "When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your **hour**, and the **power** of darkness."*

In Revelation 14, those who follow the Lamb wheresoever He goes join in with their song!

*Revelation 14:1-5 "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God."*

And finally in Revelation 19, the elders are rejoicing the fall of Babylon and proclaiming the wedding feast of the Lamb has come!

*Revelation 19:4-7 "And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. et us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."*

What a beautiful transformation! This is a representation of the corporate body being changed. Not just individuals, or Jesus individually being glorified, but His people, His body, His Kingdom, filled with the new divine nature, governed by a new head, having seen the Lamb high and lifted up and falling down at His feet and worshiping Him, this is truly the power of the cross!

