

Unnatural Response

Verse: Ezekiel 24:15-27

4/1/14

Recommended Reading

Job 1:1-22; Psalm 22:1-5; 1 Peter 1:3-7

When President Ronald Reagan passed away in June of 2004, the news media spent an entire week documenting his surviving family's grief. Cable and broadcast news programs covered the memorial services, ceremonies and funeral. But one of the biggest news stories of the week had already been reported thousands of times and in thousands of ways over the years—that of Reagan's loving relationship with his wife, Nancy.

Now imagine that his death had gone completely unnoticed—a mere footnote in the obituary section of the *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*. What if Nancy Reagan had gone on with her daily activities as though nothing had changed and the media had stayed away? That would have been an unnatural and inappropriate response to the passing of this world-changing individual. The nation of Israel reacted with questions and protest when Ezekiel's wife died. God instructed the prophet not to mourn—no lamenting, weeping or shedding of tears. Naturally, the people noticed Ezekiel's lack of public grief. They asked him why he didn't mourn openly over the loss of someone he had obviously loved so deeply. Just the response God wanted! Ezekiel explained how his situation foreshadowed theirs. Because the Israelites had forsaken God, they would live in exile. Worse, the temple—their symbol of national pride—would be destroyed. Naturally, the nation would want to grieve. But how would the people, as exiles, be able to mourn?

What a tough assignment for Ezekiel—to function as a human object lesson at the time of the loss of his wife, “the delight of [his] eyes” (Ezekiel 24:16). The message to the people was that the pride and joy of their culture, the temple in Jerusalem, was going to be desolated. Those who thought that God would never allow his holy home to be destroyed were sorely mistaken and were about to discover how wrong they were.

Consider for yourself how this passage might speak to your life. In what areas do you feel God's blessing will be protected? Perhaps you felt led to a certain job or ministry that you feel certain will be around for the foreseeable future. Maybe you're placing your confidence in the fact that the pastor of your church will be in his position long enough to see your kids get married. Perhaps you're relying on some possession in your life to remain solid, stable and valuable for years to come. Or maybe your retirement package is your source of security.

The old adage “change is the only constant” is just as true today as it ever was. Are you placing your confidence in something other than the grace and care of God? Plans change and people change; economies flourish and falter, but God is the only true constant.

Dear Lord,

Prepare my heart for what I am about to read in Your Holy Word. I pray that You would enlighten my mind to understand everything I read. I want to know You more, Father. Show me Your will in this time as I grow closer to You through Scripture. I praise Your Holy Name, Father! I love You! Amen