

Ezekiel 3 – The Commission: God’s Watchman

By Holly Effiom

VV1-3

Did Ezekiel voluntarily eat what was given him? How do you know?

Who needed to digest the food?

What does this tell us about Ezekiel’s attitude?

How did the food taste?

What does this show us about God?

LESSON: There was a reason that God admonished Ezekiel in 2:8, “...be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house...” These few verses in chapter 3 show us that Ezekiel was being *made* to eat the book. Yes, he opened his mouth, but God had to put the food in his mouth, and then He commanded Ezekiel to chew and cause it to infuse his body. It was then that Ezekiel “...did eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.” For whatever reason – rebelliousness or astonishment – Ezekiel was slow to join the program. But what we learn about God is invaluable – He can forcefully put His word out there to be eaten, but only we can digest it, take it in and allow it to fill every part of our body, and our lives. *That’s how He rolls...*

VV4-6

What did God tell Ezekiel to do?

What was Ezekiel’s mission?

Who’s words was Ezekiel to impart... his own life’s story... a description of how God looked?

To whom was Ezekiel to go to... a foreign land?

Will he need to learn the language of the people to whom God is sending him?

Is God being sarcastic?

VV7-11

Does God predict that the children of Israel will listen and become contrite?

How does God know that the children of Israel will not listen to Ezekiel?

In what way did God equip Ezekiel for his mission?

What does it mean that God made Ezekiel’s face “...strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead...”?

Could this mean that the “rebelliousness” we observed in Ezekiel’s character in chapter 2 actually was a character “flaw” that God *wanted* him to have?

Is Ezekiel’s hard-headedness a protection for him?

Protection from what?

Is V10 a direct description of what is meant by eating “...the roll”?

What exactly is Ezekiel’s mission?

Was Ezekiel supposed to go to the Chaldeans and admonish them for their sin? Who was Ezekiel’s audience?

Who are the people of the captivity?

What was Ezekiel supposed to tell these people?

If they didn’t believe Ezekiel, was he supposed to shake the dust of the town off himself and move on?

What does this tell us about God?

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LESSON: God is commissioning Ezekiel to go to his own people and give them warning from God. It’s interesting to consider that the “equipping” of Ezekiel was more related to his attitude. God clearly says that he’s made Ezekiel as stubborn and hard-headed as the people to whom He’s sending him. Isn’t that interesting? Of course, it is stubborn in the right way, but stubborn nonetheless. When I’ve considered the “equipping” of the saints, as Paul wrote, I thought of the gifts of the Spirit and skills that are provided. Should we consider stubbornness a *gift*? I do believe God has a sense of humor! Look at His quip in V6 about if had He sent Ezekiel to a “strange” people they would listen to him. Israel will not.

God clearly conveys the mission to Ezekiel, to hear His words and apply them to his own heart, and then speak them to the children of Israel, whether or not they listen. This sounds like the mission of the church:

1. Hear the words of God;
2. Apply the words of God to your own heart;
3. Go and tell your community.

Has the mission of God’s prophets changed? No... though, we sometimes skip a step or two.

VV12-15

What happened to Ezekiel then?

What did He hear as he traveled?

How might this section of scripture be related to Isa 6:2-3?

Was Ezekiel voluntarily traveling along with the Spirit?

Does this confirm our understanding of Ezekiel’s attitude from chapters 1 and 2?

Why did God’s hand have to be so strong upon Ezekiel?

Where did the Spirit take Ezekiel?

Did he start prophesying right away?

Where was Ezekiel before; prior to being placed among the captivity from Tel-Abib?

Does Tel-Abib exist today?

Why is God allowing all of this to be observed and written?

VV16-21

What happened after 7 days?

Why did God wait 7 days before speaking?

What does Gen 6:3 teach us about God?

What does God tell Ezekiel?

What are the duties of his new job?

What are the consequences of not doing the job?

As a “watchman” is it Ezekiel’s responsibility to keep a person from sinning? This is such an important concept.

What was Ezekiel responsible to do? Why is this his responsibility at all?

With this understanding, let’s extrapolate: is it yours or the Church’s responsibility to keep people from sinning?

What are you or the Church responsible to do? Why is it our responsibility?

So, under what circumstance is it good to be in the company of sinners?

Does this mean that it is OK if you’re getting some kind of benefit from the interaction?

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VV22-23

What is happening to Ezekiel now?

Is God’s hand on him in the same way that it was in V14?

What seems different?

Where is the hand of God directing Ezekiel now, and for what purpose?

Why did God move Ezekiel to the camp of those in Tel-Abib, to have him go somewhere else?

Did God have to grab Ezekiel by the scruff of the neck to make him move this time?

What did Ezekiel see?

Was Ezekiel’s response different?

LESSON: What I love about this section of scripture is the picture God is giving us of Himself, but also *ourselves*, in the person of Ezekiel.

We don’t know why or how Ezekiel became so angry with God, but he had the title of “priest” to these stiff-necked people, and he himself was one of them; and God, the One whom Ezekiel exists to serve, is reminding Ezekiel of his responsibilities. Perhaps Ezekiel didn’t realize he had such a bad attitude.

God first shook him from his anger and complacency, and reminded Ezekiel that he hadn’t been placed there to become part of the problem; nor was it his responsibility to keep these people from sinning. God had placed him there to give them warning because their behavior was going to get them *killed*. Captivity in Babylon was *not* the worst thing that could happen to them.

After the jaunt to be among the captivity of Tel-Abib, Ezekiel seemed to finally shake off his anger and remember who he was. God’s hand no longer needed to be “... strong upon...” him. Ezekiel now arose to follow his Lord to the plain, as commanded. And when he arrived there, he witnessed the same glory first shown him by the river of Chebar; however, this time when Ezekiel bowed before the Lord, it was with the right attitude, and God’s Spirit still entered him to raise him up, so that he could stand before Him.

What is the message that the Church can take from this interaction?

VV24-27

What did God tell Ezekiel once they were speaking in the plain?

What will the people do to Ezekiel?

What will God do to Ezekiel? Why?

Under what circumstances will Ezekiel be able to speak?

Will the children of Israel listen to him? Why or why not?