

Ezekiel's Call

Ezekiel 2

Ezekiel 2: *"And He said to me, 'Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak to you.' ² Then the Spirit entered me when He spoke to me, and set me on my feet; and I heard Him who spoke to me. ³ And He said to me: 'Son of man, I am sending you to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day. ⁴ For they are impudent and stubborn children. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God.' ⁵ As for them, whether they hear or whether they refuse—for they are a rebellious house—yet they will know that a prophet has been among them.*

⁶ "And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you dwell among scorpions; do not be afraid of their words or dismayed by their looks, though they are a rebellious house. ⁷ You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse, for they are rebellious. ⁸ But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house. Open your mouth and eat what I give you."

⁹ Now when I looked, there was a hand stretched out to me; and behold, a scroll of a book was in it. ¹⁰ Then He spread it before me; and there was writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it were lamentations and mourning and woe."

Background Notes

In chapter 1 Ezekiel received the great vision of the glory of God when God called him to be a prophet to Israel. That great vision reminded us of the vision of the glory of God given to the apostle John in Revelation 4:2-8: *"Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. ³ And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. ⁴ Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. ⁵ And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. ⁶ Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. ⁷ The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. ⁸ The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!'"*

Ezekiel's great vision of the glory of God was similar to the vision seen by the apostle John. At the end of Ezekiel 1, the prophet fell on his face in worship, and he heard a voice speaking. It was the Lord Himself! In Ezekiel 2, the Lord spoke directly to Ezekiel and appointed him to be a prophet to the people of Israel. The whole house of Israel was in view in Ezekiel's call – not just the southern kingdom of Judah (v3).

In verse 3 the Lord addressed Ezekiel as "Son of Man." This important expression was used more than ninety times in the book of Ezekiel. "Son of Man" emphasized the fact that Ezekiel was only a man. Even though he was called to the high office of a prophet of God, he was still only an ordinary human being like the rest of us.

However, in Daniel 7 the term "Son of Man" took on Messianic implications - so much so that at the time of our Lord, the expression "Son of Man" carried the meaning from the book of Ezekiel as well as the Messianic meaning from the book of Daniel.

Daniel 7:13-14 - *"I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. ¹⁴ Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one that shall not be destroyed".*

In Daniel 7, the "Son of Man" was the coming Messiah. Thus at the time of Christ, the term "the Son of Man" combined the meanings conveyed in both Ezekiel and Daniel.

"Son of Man" was our Lord's favorite description of Himself. In reference to our Lord, the term "Son of Man" conveyed both His deity and His humanity. He was the Son of Man in that He was fully human just as we are, yet apart from sin, and He was **the** Son of Man in that He was the fully divine Messiah predicted in the prophecy of Daniel 7.

Doctrinal Points

1. God's messengers will experience resistance to the Word.

Some Christians have the idea that going into the ministry or the Lord's service full time is a "grave train" and an easy life. They think, "How wonderful it must be to be free of this secular world and serving the Lord full time!" Well, let me tell you - serving the Lord full time in the ministry is no vacation! It's hard work and labor - if you're truly doing what the Lord is calling you to do.

Actually all believers should be serving the Lord full time, no matter where we are or whatever we do in life. And it **is** work - in fact, it's *hard* work - but it's also joyful work. We're working for the greatest Master, and there is eternal reward for our

labors. 1 Corinthians 15:58 - *“Therefore my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”*

One reason why the work of the Lord is hard is that there is resistance to the word of the Lord. The enemy is at work to distract and deceive, and people do not want to hear the word of the Lord. But even if people don't want to listen to God's Word, we are to preach it anyway. Look again at what God told Ezekiel in verses 4-7: *“They are impudent and stubborn children. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God.’ As for them, whether they hear or whether they refuse—for they are a rebellious house—yet they will know that a prophet has been among them. “And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you dwell among scorpions; do not be afraid of their words or dismayed by their looks, though they are a rebellious house. You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse, for they are rebellious.”*

As Ezekiel met resistance to his preaching, so we too will meet resistance when we share the Word of God with people. Once when I was on a plane, a young woman sitting next to me was carrying a tennis racquet. Because I like tennis, we had some common ground for conversation, and we had a great discussion about her involvement with the game of tennis. But when I turned the conversation around to her relationship with God, I met great resistance. She did *not* want to hear the word of the Lord. In fact, I recall she said, ‘You don't really believe all that stuff in the Bible, do you?’

In Ezekiel's day and our own day, people resist hearing the Word of God. God's messengers will experience resistance to the Word.

2. God's messengers must internalize the Word.

In the vision, God gave Ezekiel a scroll. In ancient times, scrolls were usually written on one side only, but this scroll was written on both sides. This indicated that the Lord had much that He wanted to communicate to Israel. The content of the scroll was lamentations, mourning, and woe (v10). In large measure, that was the content of Ezekiel. This was the Word of the Lord.

The fact that God told Ezekiel to **eat** the scroll is significant (v8). This action meant that Ezekiel was to internalize the Word of God. Before Ezekiel could speak forth the word of the Lord as God's prophet, God's Word had to be worked into his soul so thoroughly that it would become an integral part of Ezekiel's conscious and subconscious self.

As believers, we too must internalize the Word of God. Just hearing sermons once a week is not enough. A five-minute devotional time each day is not enough. We must **study** the Word of God. We must **meditate** on the word of God. We must **internalize** the Word of God. The Word must be so thoroughly internalized that, subconsciously and consciously, we will live and speak in line with His guiding principles and truth!

Have you internalized the Word of God? When we internalize the Word of God, we will find that it brings joy to our souls. In Jeremiah 15:16, the prophet Jeremiah said, “*Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.*”

We can truly be God’s messengers only when we have internalized the Word of God. How can we expect to communicate God’s Word if we really don’t know it - and if we don’t really live by it completely? God’s messengers must internalize the Word.

Practical Application

God gives us strength to do what He calls us to do.

In verse 1 God commanded Ezekiel to stand on his feet. Then in verse 2, the Spirit of God entered Ezekiel and gave him the strength to stand on his feet. In Old Testament days, the Holy Spirit did not continually indwell believers as He does today, but do you see the spiritual principle in verses 1 and 2? God will give us the strength to do what He calls us to do. Ezekiel was commanded to stand on his feet, and God gave him the strength to do what he was commanded to do.

It’s interesting that Ezekiel’s name means “God strengthens.” God gave Ezekiel the strength he needed for the unpleasant ministry ahead of him. In the same way, God will give us the strength for whatever He knows we will face in the future. It may be a grievous trial. It may be a test of our faith. It may be the difficult labor involved in starting a new ministry or church. It may be facing significant opposition from people or circumstances. But we can *be sure* that God will give us the strength to do whatever He calls us to do!