

The Scroll and the Watchman Ezekiel 3

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Commentary

Verses 2:7–3:3 – Eating the Scroll. *Open Your Mouth and Eat what I am Giving You*—This scroll, written on the front and back, was *lamentations, mourning and woe* and did not reflect the last part of the book, which speaks of Israel’s restoration (see Revelation 10:9-11). ***I opened my mouth, and He fed me this scroll.*** Ezekiel was to feed on the Word of God before he gave it to the people.

Verses 4-11 – Ezekiel Was to Speak the Words of God to the *House of Israel*. This phrase is used 101 times in the book. Notice Ezekiel was speaking to a small portion of Israel, yet his message was for the nation. Ezekiel did not need new language skills. He was not *being sent to a people of unintelligible speech or difficult language*. That is, they will understand what Ezekiel says. But God said, *the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, since they are not willing to listen to Me*. Therefore, God said, *I have made your face as hard as their faces and your forehead as hard as their foreheads. They are a rebellious house*—used 12 times to refer to Israel (2:5-6, 8; 3:9, 26-27; 12:3, 9, 25; 17:12; 24:3; 44:6).

Verses 12-15 – The Vision Ends. Ezekiel said he was transported *to the exiles who lived beside the river Chebar...embittered in the rage of my spirit*. Ezekiel’s response to the whole vision and message from God was to feel the same strong emotions of anger toward Israel’s sin that God did. And the effect was to cause *consternation among them*.

Verses 16-21 – Ezekiel Appointed as a Watchman. Several times “watchman” is metaphorically used of the prophets (Isaiah 56:10; Jeremiah 6:17; Hosea 9:8). The watchmen were stationed on a hilltop or on city walls or in watchtowers. Their job was to watch out for the enemies and warn the city’s people of any approaching attack. If Ezekiel failed to warn of the approaching danger, God would hold Ezekiel accountable for their shed blood. But if Ezekiel did warn them, and they failed to heed the warning, their blood would be on their own heads.

Verses 22-27 – God Instructs Ezekiel to Make His Way Out to the Plain. Ezekiel said, *behold, the glory of the Lord was standing there, like the glory which I saw by the river Chebar* (in 1:28). As before, Ezekiel’s response was to fall on his face in worship of God. God then instructed him to: (1) shut himself up in his house, (2) have the people tie him up with ropes, and (3) God will make Ezekiel mute so the only time he can talk is when he has a message from God for the people.

Applications

- 1. Ministry requires us to be hardheaded, not flexible and tolerant.** God told Ezekiel, *Behold, I have made your face as hard as their faces and your forehead as hard as their foreheads* (3:8). If we are going to survive the onslaught of divorce/remarriage, homosexuality, feminism, cohabitation, lying, cheating, and abortion, we will have to be hardheaded about the truth of God’s Word.
- 2. Ministry is that of a watchman, not a psychologist.** Ezekiel’s job was not to fix their problems, make them psychologically healthy, provide them with a better lifestyle, or give them improved living conditions. Neither was he responsible for how they turned out or responded. His only job was to make sure he told them the Word of God. Such is our assignment in ministering to the people of God.