

# Ezekiel 03 - Ezekiel Eats the Scroll; Appointed By God as a Watchman; Struck with Temporary Muteness

## I. Imminent judgment upon Judah (Ezek 1:1—24:27)

### (1) Ezekiel's preparation for ministry (Ezek 1:1—3:27)

#### (C) God's Word (2:8—3:11)

(a) Ezekiel eats God's Word (2:8—3:3)

(b) Ezekiel to deliver God's Word (3:4-11)

#### (D) God's hand (3:12-27)

(a) Spirit leads Ezekiel back to exiles (3:12-15)

(b) Ezekiel appointed as a watchman (3:16-21)

(i) Responsibility to declare God's Word (3:16-17)

(ii) Responsibility to warn the wicked (3:18-19)

(iii) Responsibility to warn the righteous (3:20-21)

(c) Ezekiel's limitations (3:22-27)

(i) Incarceration (3:22-25)

(ii) Limited dumbness (3:26-27)

## Ezekiel 3

(a) Ezekiel eats God's Word (2:8—3:3)

**1** Then He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; **eat this scroll**, and go, speak to the house of Israel."

**1** Then He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel."

**1** Then he told me, "Son of Man, eat! Eat what you see—this scroll—and then go talk to the house of Israel."

**1** Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel.

- "...eat this scroll" - an unusual command, plus the contents of the scroll were unpleasant

— The command here is emphatic; Ezekiel was not only instructed to consume the scroll, but also to go and speak to the house of Israel

— This emphasizes the connection between the scroll and Ezekiel's prophetic message. He first had to internalize God's revelation before delivering it to the nation.

- 2 So I opened my mouth, and He fed me this scroll.
- 2 So I opened my mouth, and He fed me this scroll.
- 2 So I opened my mouth and he fed me the scroll.
- 2 So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll.
- In contrast to Israel's rebellion, Ezekiel obeyed God and ate the scroll as instructed

### **Digesting His Words**

- The concept of "eating the words" may sound a bit strange
  - Jeremiah said, "Thy words were found and I did eat them" (Jer 15:16)
  - John is also so instructed (Rev 10:8-11)
  - The Lord Himself, when He was confronted by Satan in the temptations (Matt 4:4) quoted: "Man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (quoted from Deut 8:3)
- There are many levels of this concept of "eating His Word":
  - One must fully digest what the Lord has said

3 And He said to me, "Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you." Then I ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth.

3 He said to me, "Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you." Then I ate it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth.

3 Then he told me, "Son of Man, fill your stomach and digest this scroll that I'm giving you." So I ate it, and it was like sweet honey in my mouth.

**3** And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.

- Once Ezekiel fully digested/assimilated the message on the scroll, he reported that it tasted as sweet as honey

— In Jer 15:16, Jeremiah ate the words of God and found them just as pleasant

— Same response from John in Rev 10:10 after he ate a scroll, but later it became bitter in his stomach

(b) Ezekiel to deliver God's Word (3:4-11)

**4** Then He said to me, "Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them.

**4** Then He said to me, "Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them.

**4** Then he told me, "Son of Man, go to the house of Israel and tell them what I have to say to them,

4 And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them.

- God now renews His command to Ezekiel to go to the house of Israel and speak His words to them

5 For you are not being sent to a people of unintelligible speech or difficult language, *but* to the house of Israel,

5 For you are not being sent to a people of unintelligible speech or difficult language, *but* to the house of Israel,

5 because you're not going to a people whose speech you cannot understand or whose language is difficult to speak. Instead, you're going to the house of Israel.

5 For thou art not sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, but to the house of Israel;

- The renewed command (v4) now includes an explanation to whom Ezekiel was not sent: he was not being sent to foreigners or those who lacked eloquence

— He was being sent to his own countrymen, those who spoke Ezekiel's own language (Hebrew)

6 nor to many peoples of unintelligible speech or difficult language, whose words you cannot understand. **But I have sent you to the people who understand you;**

6 nor to many peoples of unintelligible speech or difficult language, whose words you cannot understand. But I have sent you to them who should listen to you;

6 This isn't a large group of people whose speech is unintelligible to you or whose language is difficult for you to comprehend. Frankly, if I had sent you to that kind of people, they would certainly have listened to you!

6 Not to many people of a strange speech and of an hard language, whose words thou canst not understand. Surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee.

- God was not calling Ezekiel to be a foreign missionary, but a home missionary

- "...But I have sent you to the people who understand you" - a sobering statement, meaning: If I sent you as a foreign missionary, outside of the nation of Israel, the foreigners would listen to your message

7 yet the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, since they are not willing to listen to Me. The entire house of Israel certainly is stubborn and obstinate.

7 yet the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, since they are not willing to listen to Me. Surely the whole house of Israel is stubborn and obstinate.

7 But the house of Israel won't listen to you, since they weren't willing to listen to me.  
That's because the entire house of Israel is hard-headed and hard-hearted.

7 But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted.

- God continues with the bleak assessment of Ezekiel's audience; Ezekiel was clearly told to expect failure in his ministry because the people of Israel would not listen to what he had to say

- God's point of view is that Israel wouldn't reject Ezekiel as much as they would reject God Himself; if they would not listen to God, then why would they listen to Ezekiel, who speaks for God?

— Why would God send Ezekiel if He knows the people won't listen? *So that God might be just when He judges.*

8 Behold, I have made your face just as hard as their faces, and your forehead just as hard as their foreheads.

8 Behold, I have made your face as hard as their faces and your forehead as hard as their foreheads.

8 So pay attention! I'm going to make you just as obstinate and unyielding as they are.

8 Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads.

- God equips the called; in this case, since the Israelites were too thick-headed to heed God's words, the Lord would make Ezekiel thick-headed as well, albeit in a different way...

9 Like emery harder than flint I have made your forehead. Do not be afraid of them or be dismayed before them, since they are a rebellious house."

9 Like emery harder than flint I have made your forehead. Do not be afraid of them or be dismayed before them, though they are a rebellious house."

9 I'm making you harder than flint—like diamond! So you are not to fear them or be intimidated by how they look at you, since they're a rebellious group."

9 As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.

- Instead of being hardened against God, Ezekiel (name means "God strengthens") will come to mean "God hardens" in the fullest sense of the name

— The promise is that attacks or rejection would be unable to intimidate the prophet or derail him from his appointed task

— This is clear assurance from the Lord that he would be given exceptional resilience, and that resilience would allow him to obey God's orders

## **Ezekiel is Commissioned to Speak**

10 Moreover, He said to me, "Son of man, take into your heart all My words which I will speak to you and listen closely.

10 Moreover, He said to me, "Son of man, take into your heart all My words which I will speak to you and listen closely.

10 Next, he told me, "Son of Man, take to heart every word that I'm telling you. Listen carefully,

**10** Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears.

- Now, God begins to give Ezekiel his instructions (Cf. v4)

— Ezekiel is urged to carefully receive God's words into his heart (believe them), and hear the message (obey them)

11 Go to **the exiles**, to the sons of your people, and speak to them and tell them, whether they listen or not, '**This is what the Lord GOD says.'**'"

11 Go to the exiles, to the sons of your people, and speak to them and tell them, whether they listen or not, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.'

11 then go immediately to the exiles; that is, to your people's descendants, and tell them, 'This is what the Lord GOD says...' whether they listen or not."

11 And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.

- "...the exiles" - Ezekiel's audience were the Jews in captivity in Babylon; he was not directed to address the Jews who were still in Judah

- "...This is what the Lord GOD says" - as in 2:4, this was the formula that God gave to Ezekiel to say to his audience, which signaled that he was about to reveal a message from God

(D) God's hand (3:12-27)

(a) Spirit leads Ezekiel back to exiles (3:12-15)

**12** Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard a great rumbling sound behind me: "Blessed be the glory of the LORD from His place!"

**12** Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard a great rumbling sound behind me, "Blessed be the glory of the LORD in His place."

**12** Then the Spirit lifted me up and I heard a great earthquake behind me and the glory of the LORD arose from his place,

**12** Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the LORD from his place.

- After receiving his commission (1:28b—3:11), Ezekiel's vision of the cherubs and the Shekinah Glory became active again, as he is transported to the city of Tel-abib (near Babylon)

13 And *I heard* the sound of the wings of the living beings touching one another and the sound of the wheels beside them, even a great rumbling sound.

13 And I *heard* the sound of the wings of the living beings touching one another and the sound of the wheels beside them, even a great rumbling sound.

13 accompanied by the sound of the wings of the living creatures gently touching each other and with the sound of the wheels emanating from the front, accompanied by a great earthquake.

13 I heard also the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels over against them, and a noise of a great rushing.

- From this verse we can conclude that the vision Ezekiel saw originally (1:4—2:7), and now starting up again, was not allegorical and not an hallucination

### **Ezekiel Addresses the Israelis**

14 So the Spirit lifted me up and took me away; and I went **embittered in the rage of my spirit**, and **the hand of the LORD was strong on me**.

14 So the Spirit lifted me up and took me away; and I went embittered in the rage of my spirit, and the hand of the LORD was strong on me.

14 Then the Spirit lifted me up and carried me away. I went bitterly with an angry attitude as the hand of the LORD rested on me.

14 So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me.

- "...embittered in the rage of my spirit" - refers to the inner struggle Ezekiel faced regarding whether to accept the call to prophetic ministry or not

- "...the hand of the LORD was strong on me" - ultimately he accepted the commission because of divine compulsion; he had no choice but to embrace his calling

15 Then I came to the exiles who lived beside the **river Chebar at Tel-abib**, and I sat there for seven days where they were living, causing **consternation** among them.

15 Then I came to the exiles who lived beside the river Chebar at Tel-abib, and I sat there seven days where they were living, causing consternation among them.

15 I came to the exiles at Tel-abib by the Chebar River and sat down among them for seven days, appalled.

15 Then I came to them of the captivity at Telaviv, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.

- "...river Chebar" - the same as Chabor or Habor, where the Northern Kingdom had been transported by Tiglath-pileser and Shalmaneser (2 Kings 17:6; 1 Chr 5:26)
- It flows into the Euphrates near Carchemish or Circesium, 200 miles north of Babylon
- "...Tel-abib" - not the Tel Aviv in Israel that we know today, but the Jewish settlement by the Chebar River in Babylon
- "...consternation" - *mashmim*, "to be appalled" or "to be desolated"; it is an expression of daze and astonishment describing "a man silenced and unable to speak"

(b) Ezekiel appointed as a watchman (3:16-21)

(i) Responsibility to declare God's Word (3:16-17)

**16** Now at the end of seven days the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

**16** At the end of seven days the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

**16** At the end of the seven days, this message from the LORD came to me:

**16** And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

- After a week of Ezekiel processing the conflicting emotions that his call to prophetic office had stirred in him, the Lord tells him that this office included being a "watchman"

**17** "Son of man, I have appointed you as a **watchman** for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me.

**17** "Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me.

**17** "Son of Man," he said, "I've appointed you to be a watchman over the house of Israel. Therefore when you hear a message that comes from me, you are to warn them for me.

**17** Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

- "...watchman" - in ancient Israel, watchmen would stand on the city walls and scan the horizon, keeping their eyes peeled for anything that may pose a danger to the city

— The job was demanding and thankless, but crucial to the protection and welfare of a city (Cf. 2 Sam 18:24-27; 2 Kings 9:17-20)

— What a literal watchmen was to a city, the prophet was to the nation of Israel

symbolically (Cf. Is 21:6; Jer 6:17; Hosea 9:8; Hab 2:1). He was scan the political horizons, warning people of danger to come.

Ps 127:1: Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

Is 62:6: I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night

— As a "watchman," Ezekiel was not at liberty to speak of his own accord, but only as God prompted him

Verses 18-21 show that Ezekiel was tasked with keeping watch over two distinct groups within the nation of Israel: the wicked (v18-19) and the righteous (v20-21). The passage presents four hypothetical scenarios. When analyzing these scenarios, it is important to bear in mind that physical death was one of the punishments for disobedience as prescribed by the Mosaic Law. Throughout the passage, death and life must be seen as physical rather than spiritual consequences of certain actions. In other words, v18-21 do not deal with the loss of salvation but rather with the issue of conformity to the Law of Moses.

(ii) Responsibility to warn the wicked (3:18-19)

18 When I say to the wicked, 'You will certainly die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way so that he may live, that wicked person shall die for wrongdoing, but his blood I will require from your hand.

18 When I say to the wicked, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand.

18 "So when I say to a wicked person, 'You're about to die,' if you don't warn or instruct that wicked person that his behavior is wicked so he can live, that wicked person will die in his sin, but I'll hold you responsible for his death.

18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

- The first scenario: a prophet fails to convey God's warning a specific person of death, or a city or nation of impending destruction, and the prophet failed to relay this warning

— In this instance, the wicked would still face physical death because of their sin, but at the same time God would also take the life of the prophet because of their disobedience to the word of the Lord

— There was no such thing as "prophetic immunity" if the prophet deviated from the word of the Lord

19 However if you have warned the wicked and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die for wrongdoing, but you have saved yourself.

19 Yet if you have warned the wicked and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered yourself.



19 If you warn the wicked person, and he doesn't repent of his wickedness or of his wicked behavior, he'll die in his sin, but you will have saved your own life.

19 Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

- The second scenario: a prophet gives warning to the wicked, but the wicked refuses to abandon his wicked way

- In this situation, the wicked would die physically because of their sin, but the prophet would ensure the safety of his own life because he delivered the word of the Lord accurately

### (iii) Responsibility to warn the righteous (3:20-21)

20 Again, when a **righteous person** turns away from his righteousness and commits sin, and I place an obstacle before him, he will die; since you have not warned him, he shall die in his sin, and his righteous deeds which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require from your hand.

20 Again, when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I place an obstacle before him, he will die; since you have not warned him, he shall die in his sin, and his righteous deeds which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand.

20 "When a righteous man abandons his righteousness to practice unrighteousness, I'll set a stumbling block before him. He'll die. If you don't warn him, he'll die in his sin and the righteous deeds that he had practiced won't be remembered, but you'll be held responsible for his death.

**20** Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

- "...righteous person" - important to understand the distinction between "righteousness" in the OT, which refers to adherence to the Mosaic Law, and "righteousness" in the NT, which refers to Christ's imputed righteousness to believers

- In the OT, a person's level of righteousness was measured by their conformity to the Mosaic Law, with obedience leading to life and disobedience resulting in physical death

- The third scenario: a prophet fails to warn a righteous man who initially conformed to the Mosaic Law, but later deviated from it and began to commit iniquity

- At some point, God would put a stumbling block before the previously righteous man, with the result that the person would die in their sin

- His deeds would not be remembered, so they would not weigh in his favor and save his life

— Neither would the prophet's failure to deliver the word of the Lord accurately and completely excuse the person who turned to sin

— For failing to deliver the word of the Lord accurately, the prophet would also die

21 However, if you have warned the righteous person that the righteous is not to sin, and he does not sin, he shall certainly live because he took warning; and you have saved yourself."

21 However, if you have warned the righteous man that the righteous should not sin and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; and you have delivered yourself."

21 If you warn the righteous person, so that he doesn't commit sin, then he'll live, since he had been warned. And you will have saved your life."

21 Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.

- The fourth scenario: a prophet issues a divine warning to a righteous man, who responds by repenting

— In this case, the righteous man would surely live because he took notice of the warning and returned to conformance with the Mosaic Law

— The prophet also delivered his own soul because he had fulfilled his calling

Ezekiel's call into the office of prophet ended in v21 with a stern admonition to faithfully fulfill his role as a watchman for the house of Israel. In this capacity, Ezekiel bore the responsibility of warning the people about impending judgment. Neglecting this duty would make him accountable for their sins as if he had committed them himself. With the call into the prophetic office in hand, the ministry could commence in a practical way.

#### (c) Ezekiel's limitations (3:22-27)

##### (i) Incarceration (3:22-25)

**22** Now the hand of the LORD was on me there, and He said to me, "Get up, go out to **the plain**, and there I will speak to you."

**22** The hand of the LORD was on me there, and He said to me, "Get up, go out to the plain, and there I will speak to you."

**22** The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he told me, "Get up! Go to the valley, and I'll speak with you there."

**22** And the hand of the LORD was there upon me; and he said unto me, Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will there talk with thee.

- The Shekinah Glory now appears to Ezekiel for the second time; first time was to summon Ezekiel to prophetic office, the second time caused him to begin his prophetic ministry

- "...the plain" - *bikah*, likely denotes a valley

- Ezekiel would go to this valley one more time (37:1); on this visit, the valley was empty. In his next visit (37:1), it would be full of dry bones
- The difference in the two visits to the valley was in the timing: his first visit was before the destruction of Jerusalem, while his second visit was after Jerusalem's destruction
- The purpose for Ezekiel's first visit to the valley was to receive revelation from God; God intended to communicate specific messages to him there

23 So I got up and went out to the plain; and behold, the glory of the LORD was standing there, like the glory that I saw by the river Chebar, and I fell on my face.

23 So I got up and went out to the plain; and behold, the glory of the LORD was standing there, like the glory which I saw by the river Chebar, and I fell on my face.

23 So I got up, went to the valley, and there was the glory of the LORD, standing there just like I had seen at the Chebar River. So I fell on my face.

**23** Then I arose, and went forth into the plain: and, behold, the glory of the LORD stood there, as the glory which I saw by the river of Chebar: and I fell on my face.

- Ezekiel obeyed God's instruction and traveled to the valley, where he saw the Shekinah Glory once again; the result was the same: he fell on his face (Cf. 1:28)

24 But **the Spirit entered me** and set me up on my feet; and He spoke with me and said to me, "Go, **shut yourself inside your house**.

24 The Spirit then entered me and made me stand on my feet, and He spoke with me and said to me, "Go, shut yourself up in your house.

24 The Spirit entered me, rested on me, caused me to stand on my feet, and then he spoke to me. This is what he had to say: "Go barricade yourself in your house.

24 Then the spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thine house.

- "...the Spirit entered me" - again, the Spirit entered Ezekiel and stood him upright (Cf. 2:2) so he was ready to hear what God had to say

— While other instances of the "spirit" so far in Ezekiel likely referred to the spirit of life issuing from God (Cf. 1:12,20,21), the activity here points to the Holy Spirit's enablement for Ezekiel to stand before God

- Ezekiel received three specific instructions on how to begin carrying out his prophetic office:

1. Shut himself inside his house (v24)
2. He would be tied up with ropes (v25)
3. He would become unable to speak of his own accord (v26-27)

- "...shut yourself inside your house" - this does not imply that Ezekiel was never to leave his house (Cf. 5:2; 12:3). Instead he was to refrain from any public ministry.

— However, the elders could and did come to him to receive the prophecies he was receiving from the Lord (Cf. 8:1; 14:1; 20:1). He was to open his mouth only in his own house to those who consulted him privately (v24; 26:8).

— This intermittent silence prevailed from the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem until news of the fall of the city was brought to the prophet by a fugitive about two years later (Cf. 24:1,27).

25 And as for you, son of man, **they** will put ropes around you and bind you with them so that you do not go out among them.

25 As for you, son of man, they will put ropes on you and bind you with them so that you cannot go out among them.

25 Now pay attention! They're going to bind you with ropes, tying you up right in their midst, so you won't be able to circulate freely among them.

25 But thou, O son of man, behold, they shall put bands upon thee, and shall bind thee with them, and thou shalt not go out among them:

- "...they" - who would place the bands on Ezekiel? The pronoun used is non-descriptive; 4:8 tells us that it will be God who would bind Ezekiel with ropes

— Already confined to his home, the prophet would also have to lie on his bed for a certain length of time to convey a divine lesson. God Himself would put shackles on him so that he could remain in this uncomfortable position.

#### (ii) Limited dumbness (3:26-27)

26 Moreover, **I will make** your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you will be unable to speak and will not be a man who reprimands them, since they are a rebellious house.

26 Moreover, I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you will be mute and cannot be a man who rebukes them, for they are a rebellious house.

26 Meanwhile, I'll make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you'll be mute and unable to reprove them, since they're a rebellious group.

26 And I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they are a rebellious house.

- Ezekiel started his ministry in silence; similar to how Saul began his ministry (at Damascus)

- Here Ezekiel is struck dumb except as the Lord elects to speak through him. He would continue in this temporary muteness for a total of 7-1/2 years, and during that time, he would deliver all of the messages contained in Ezek 4-33, speaking only when God gave him a revelation to share with the people.

- "...I will make" - it was God who sealed up Ezekiel's mouth temporarily

— The removal of speech is an ironic thing to do to a prophet, but God provided a reason for His decision: He did not want Ezekiel to rebuke the exiles because of their open rebellion

— Reacting to them would have been his natural tendency, because his countrymen, already in exile, were "a rebellious house"

— An example of such a reaction, which God was likely trying to avoid, is Moses (Num 20:9-11) when he struck the rock instead of speaking to the rock

— Moses rebuked the people when God had not done so at that point; as a result, Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land

— God did not want Ezekiel to make the same mistake, therefore He prevented him from acting according to his natural tendency by making him dumb/mute

### **Skits and Metaphors**

- Instead of speaking a great deal, Ezekiel is going to *act out the parables* which God gives to him.
- This is one of them: he goes into his house and locks himself in. Why? *To show that God has rejected this rebellious people. Ezekiel is rejecting them as a show of God's rejection of them.*
  - He was to open his mouth only in his own house to those who consulted him privately (v24; 26:8).
  - This intermittent silence prevailed from the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem until news of the fall of the city was brought to the prophet by a fugitive about two years later (24:1,27).
  - Then Ezekiel spoke freely, and the people realized that God had spoken.

27 But when I speak to you, I will open your mouth and you will say to them, 'This is what the Lord GOD says:' The one who hears, let him hear; and the one who refuses, let him refuse; for **they are a rebellious house**.

27 But when I speak to you, I will open your mouth and you will say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.' He who hears, let him hear; and he who refuses, let him refuse; for they are a rebellious house.

27 But when I speak with you, I'll open your mouth so you can say to them, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: "As for those who will listen, 'Let them listen,' but as for those who refuse, 'Let them refuse," since they're a rebellious group.'"

27 But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbear, let him forbear: for they are a rebellious house.

- Ezekiel was muted except for when God spoke; if God didn't speak, He didn't allow Ezekiel to speak (see notes on why in v26)

— When Ezekiel spoke, it was because God was speaking. When Ezekiel was silent, it was because God was silent.

— This was to be the scenario, regardless of whether the people listened and obeyed what Ezekiel (God) said, or not

- "...they are a rebellious house" - given their historical disobedience, along with this repeated phrase (Cf. 2:3,5,6,7,8; 3:9,26,27), it was likely the Israelites would refuse to listen