

Ezekiel 02 - Ezekiel's Call; Ezekiel Receives a Scroll

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

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

(B) God's visions (1:4—2:7)

(e) Ezekiel's assignment (2:1-7)

(i) Spirit stands Ezekiel up (2:1-2)

(ii) Ezekiel to be sent to rebellious Israel (2:3-5)

(iii) Ezekiel not to fear (2:6)

(iv) Ezekiel to speak God's Word (2:7)

(C) God's Word (2:8—3:11)

(a) Ezekiel eats God's Word (2:8—3:3)

Ezekiel 2

(e) Ezekiel's assignment (2:1-7)

(i) Spirit stands Ezekiel up (2:1-2)

1 Then He said to me, "**Son of man**, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you."

1 Then He said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet that I may speak with you!"

1 "Son of Man," the LORD said, "get up on your feet. I want to talk to you."

1 And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.

- Ezekiel is strengthened by the voice from the throne

- "Then He said" - *wayyomer*, 41x in Ezekiel; the subject is always YHWH, but His name is only mentioned 5x (Cf. 4:13; 9:4; 23:36; 44:2,5)

— God could've introduced Himself to Ezekiel (Cf. 20:44), however there could not have been any doubt in Ezekiel's mind that the one sitting on the throne, in the likeness of a man, was none other than God

- "...Son of man" - *ben-' adam*, 1st of 93x used in Ezekiel; it emphasizes man's weakness and frailty in contrast to God's strength

— In the NT, Jesus is also referred to as the "Son of Man" (Cf. Matt 8:20), however He is also known as the "Son of God" (Cf. Luke 1:35)

— These are contrasting titles, with one emphasizing His humanity and the other emphasizing His deity

- God ordered Ezekiel to stand up on his feet because He intended to speak to him about his call to prophetic office

2 And as He spoke to me **the Spirit entered me** and **set me on my feet**; and I heard **Him speaking to me**.

2 As He spoke to me the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet; and I heard *Him* speaking to me.

2 Even while he was speaking to me, the Spirit entered me, set me on my feet, and I listened to the voice that had been speaking to me.

2 And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.

- As Ezekiel lay collapsed and acutely aware of his smallness before God's greatness, God spoke clearly to him

- "...the Spirit entered me" - although Ezekiel could not stand before God as commanded, God's Spirit enabled him to do so. This demonstrates God's compassionate response to human helplessness.

— Ezekiel stood before God and heard Him speak, but not in his own power

— In the OT the Holy Spirit did not indwell all believers permanently. He indwelt selected persons temporarily for divine service (Cf. Ex 31:1-11; 1 Sam 10:9-11; Ps 51:11; Ezek 2:2; 3:24).

— The Spirit indwelling Ezekiel was necessary for him to receive the prophetic office and enter into direct communication with God

— Without the Holy Spirit, no prophet could have given his audience the very words of God (1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:19-21)

— An obvious lesson here is that when God gives a command, He always provides the power and grace to carry it out. He supplies everything we need to accomplish the task.

- "...set me on my feet" - the psalmist wondered who could stand before God (Ps 24:1-5). Without God's intervention on our behalf, no one can stand before God.

- "...I heard *Him* speaking to me" - this is an example of the Spirit unveiling something that has not been revealed before: the ministry of "revelation" of the Spirit in relation to Scripture (Cf. 2 Sam 23:2-3; Ezek 8:3; 11:1,24; Micah 3:8; John 16:12-15; 1 Cor 2:9-10; 2 Peter 1:21)

Before Ezekiel uttered one prophetic word or completed one prophetic action, God had to shift his mindset from his current pain (exiled in Babylon, unable to fulfill his intended calling), to God's inexhaustible glory. Ezekiel could not understand God's presence and power until he accurately assessed his own position before Him.

(ii) Ezekiel to be sent to rebellious Israel (2:3-5)

3 Then He said to me, "**Son of man**, I am sending you to the sons of Israel, to a **rebellious people** who have rebelled **against Me**; they and their fathers have **revolted against Me** to this very day.

3 Then He said to me, "Son of man, I am sending you to the sons of Israel, to a rebellious people who have rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day.

3 "Son of Man, I'm sending you to that rebellious people, the Israelis, who have rebelled against me the same way their ancestors did. And they're still rebels to this very day!

3 And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day.

- Aware of God's glory and enabled by His power, Ezekiel now receives God's calling to deliver a troubling message to a rebellious people

- "...Son of man" - basically means "human being"; it's used about 90x in Ezekiel

— The Gospels record the Jesus regularly used this term to express His humanity

- Then God gives Ezekiel some background information on the recipients of his message...

- "...rebellious" - *marad*, active disloyalty to God; a frequent term in Ezekiel: used 7x in next 10 verses; 17x in total (Ezek 2:5-6,8; 3:9,26-27; 12:3,9,25; 17:12; 24:3; 44:6)

- "...people" - *goyim*, plural ("the nations"), a word not normally used of Israel! Israel is usually *contrasted* with the "nations," not included among the "nations."

- "...against Me" [2x] - God took Israel's rebellion and disobedience of the Law personally; it was an affront to Him

- "...revolted" - *pasha*, also means "to rebel"; emphasizes a violation of the Law of Moses

God called Ezekiel to speak to His exiled people, raising him up as His chosen and empowered prophet. God did not leave His rebellious people without a faithful witness as they experienced His promised judgment and awaited more. God seeks and speaks to rebellious people. Ezekiel's experience reflects God's heart. God persistently reaches toward wayward people, calling them to Himself even as they experience sin's consequences.

4 So I am sending you to those who are **impudent** and **obstinate** children, and you shall say to them, '**This is what the Lord GOD says:**'

4 I am sending you to them who are stubborn and obstinate children, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.'

4 They're stubborn and strong willed. I'm sending you to them to tell them what the LORD says.

4 For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD.

- "...impudent" - *kashel panim*, literally means "hard of face"; appears only here in Scripture (Cf. Is 48:4)

- "...obstinate" - *lev ha'even*, literally means "firm of heart"

— The Israelites had an obstinately uncooperative attitude toward God; an unyielding stubbornness that refuses to give in under any circumstances

- "...This is what the Lord GOD says" - to Ezekiel's audience, characterized by stubborn insubordination, Ezekiel would have to reiterate "Thus says the Lord"

— Ezekiel did not have to imagine what to say or how to act. He simply had to declare, "This is what the Lord GOD says." He was to deliver God's Word, to God's people, empowered by God's Spirit.

— The people's refusal to listen could not change Ezekiel's message. Human acceptance does not validate God's Word. Ezekiel's message would stand even when the wayward Israelites rejected his words.

— Ezekiel had both the hardest and easiest job imaginable. He did not have to think of the words to say or how to act...he simply had to say what God told him to say and do what God told him to do. But the hard part was...he was speaking and acting before a rebellious and hard-hearted people, who would not take kindly to his messages.

5 As for them, whether they listen or not—for they are a rebellious house—they will know that a prophet has been among them.

5 As for them, whether they listen or not—for they are a rebellious house—they will know that a prophet has been among them.

5 Whether this rebellious group listens to you or not, at least they'll realize that a prophet had appeared in their midst!

5 And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them.

- God would make sure that, even if they didn't listen, they would know Ezekiel was a prophet from God

— They would know this by way of fulfilled prophecy; Ezekiel would pass the standard test of a legitimate prophet (Cf. Deut 18:20-22)

— In light of Deut 18:20, it was not very daring to prophesy events that would be fulfilled hundreds of years later because the prophet would not have to answer for the prophecies that remained unfulfilled

— It was a greater "occupational hazard" to make near term prophecies. Thus, one of the tests of a prophet was that he had to declare a near prophecy, and if it came to pass, then one could also trust his far prophecies

— Ezekiel's near prophecies were all fulfilled within months or years of their proclamation, and he was alive to see their fulfillment (Cf. 12:10-13). Consequently, the fulfillment of his far prophecies could also be relied upon.

- God's calling must have been quite discouraging for Ezekiel. From the start, the prophet understood that no one would listen to his messages. He knew ahead of time not to anticipate large crowds flocking to his ministry.

(iii) Ezekiel not to fear (2:6)

6 And as for you, son of man, you are not to fear **them** nor fear **their words**, though **thistles** and **thorns** are with you and you sit on **scorpions**; you are not to fear **their words** nor be **dismayed at their presence**, since they are a rebellious house.

6 And you, son of man, neither fear them nor fear their words, though thistles and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions; neither fear their words nor be dismayed at their presence, for they are a rebellious house.

6 "Now as for you, Son of Man, never be afraid of them or of anything they have to say, because being with them will be like settling down to live among briars, thorn bushes, and scorpions! Don't be afraid of anything they have to say, and don't be awed by their appearance, since they are a rebellious group.

6 And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.

- God now turns His focus from Ezekiel's audience to Ezekiel himself, offering him a clear explanation of the rejection awaiting him...

- God told Ezekiel to not be afraid, which was meant as a reassurance; the reason for the reassurance God gives him is because "they are a rebellious house"

- "...them" - don't fear the Israelites themselves

- "...their words" [2x] - regardless of the verbal abuse he would face, Ezekiel was not to fear their words (God reiterated this later in the verse)

- "...thistles" - *saravim*, could refer to a prickly plant, but the word also means "to defy," "to decline," or "to refuse." God already described His people as rebellious, now He told Ezekiel that they would defy His Word.

- "...thorns" - *sallonim*, thorns or pricking nettles

- "...scorpions" - *'akravvim*, the connotation is that the words of the Israelites would hurt as painfully as a scorpion's sting

- "...dismayed at their presence" - the appearance and demeanor of the Israelites may be threatening, but God was going to be with him (Cf. Jer 1:8)

(iv) Ezekiel to speak God's Word (2:7)

7 But you shall speak My words to them whether they listen or not, for they are rebellious.
7 But you shall speak My words to them whether they listen or not, for they are rebellious.
7 You are to tell them whatever I have to say to them, whether they listen or not, since they are rebellious."

7 And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious.

- Ezekiel, speak My words to them, and don't worry about the response, or lack of, you receive from them

— Ezekiel would not be held responsible for the people's response to his words, but rather Ezekiel's faithfulness to preach the words God gives him

— God is trying to get through to Ezekiel that Israel is not likely to listen to him because they were in rebellion. But their rejection would not change what mattered most—God's prophet had been among them, God was still speaking, still reaching out, still offering His word and a path of repentance, revealing His heart of compassion for people who rejected and rebelled against Him.

Ezekiel's path would be difficult, but God's Word would be his stronghold. He simply had to deliver God's message boldly and trust God's Spirit to accomplish what human effort could not.

(C) God's Word (2:8—3:11)

(a) Ezekiel eats God's Word (2:8—3:3)

8 "Now you, son of man, listen to what I am speaking to you; do not be rebellious like that rebellious house. Open your mouth wide and eat what I am giving you."

8 "Now you, son of man, listen to what I am speaking to you; do not be rebellious like that rebellious house. Open your mouth and eat what I am giving you."

8 "Son of Man, you are to listen to what I tell you. You are never to be rebellious like they are: a rebellious group. Now, open your mouth and eat what I'm giving you..."

8 But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee.

- God didn't want Ezekiel to compromise with the Israelites and become rebellious like them; his attitude toward the Word of God should not mirror that of Israel

— Ezekiel was specifically cautioned against objecting to his calling, a behavior exhibited by Moses in Ex 3:11; 4:1,10,13, as well as by Jeremiah (Jer 1:6). Instead, Ezekiel was to accept his calling and faithfully carry it out.

9 Then I looked, and behold, **a hand** was extended to me; and behold, **a scroll** was in it.

9 Then I looked, and behold, a hand was extended to me; and lo, a scroll was in it.

9 As I watched, all of a sudden there was a hand being stretched out in my direction! And there was a scroll

9 And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein;

- "...a hand" - the hand of God

- "...a scroll" - the content of the scroll is only hinted at in this passage, but it can be deduced that it contained the prophecies that Ezekiel was to proclaim in the course of his ministry

10 When He spread it out before me, it was **written on the front and back**, and written on it were songs of **mourning, sighing, and woe**.

10 When He spread it out before me, it was written on the front and back, and written on it were lamentations, mourning and woe.

10 being unrolled right in front of me! Written on both sides were lamentations, mourning, and cries of grief.

10 And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.

- "...written on the front and back" - there was no room on the scroll for Ezekiel's own thoughts or words

— Although this point is subtly hinted at here, it's clear in 3:17-21 that Ezekiel's mandate was to speak only the words of God. He was not allowed to express his own views.

- "...mourning, sighing, and woe" - this accurately summarizes the contents of Ezek 4-32, which is mostly about the downfall of the Judean kingdom, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and the final captivity of the people

— It does not, however, reflect the latter part of the book, in which the prophet spoke of Israel's restoration. This is why Ezekiel was recommissioned in Ezek 33—the content of his message was substantially changed after his message of woe was fulfilled.