

Ezekiel 3

Breaking Down Scripture

Read Ezekiel 3:1-7: Ezekiel is directed to communicate to a spiritually deaf people. America has many similar characteristics to Judah. We have people who do not know that they are the walking dead. They are so committed to lifestyles that are imaginary and harmful. They are speaking nonsense and are advocating for things opposite of what is healthy. A heavenly level of power is required to reach a zombie nation. We just finished the repetitious and ignored prophecy of Jeremiah. He saw his own people go into judgment. God lets us live out our nightmares when we go without him. Tough love is the last ditch effort before we hit the waterfall of eternity.

Spiritual deafness leads to depravity. It always goes from bad to worse. God may have given us a small reprieve, if we can turn back to him. The Bible sometimes seems like a tiresome exercise to repurpose an evil culture. Ezekiel is going to retrace many of Jeremiah's prophecies, since both men ministered around the time of the first Babylonian captivity. Ezekiel will incorporate more of a *show and tell* approach. He will put himself in the public square, along with replicas of Jerusalem under siege, etc.. Jeremiah was a faithful witness. Ezekiel will be a show and tell herald. He will be like an open-air actor, who speaks to the hills and mountains and is surrounded by many props. We tend to remember sights and public spectacles, than remembering a narrative.

Ezekiel has also timeless references to things that are dead coming back to life.

What hope does Ezekiel have that Jeremiah did not see? Jeremiah spoke of the need to change behavior. That seems straight forward, but it cannot happen at ground level. It is a heavenly thing. Ezekiel is showing us how to get more into the Spirit of things.

Ezekiel is now becoming part of a heavenly high-voltage circuit. He must become one with God's promises. He is joining the lightning chariots and becoming a component of something far more effective than himself. That is the point of the Old Testament. Man cannot fix it; but God can.

To accomplish this, Ezekiel must get onto God's frequency. God tells Ezekiel to begin this process by eating the scroll. Jesus is known as the living word of God who must live within us to start the process. This is part of his commissioning process.

We cannot be disconnected from the message. It is not our job to merely publish God's word. We tend to say that *your argument is with God, not with me*; when we deliver unpopular messages. When we say that, we are thinking like an unbeliever. To be unaffected by the disagreement between God and man is to not be fulfilling our priestly role. It takes a little more skin in the game and a little more passion than that. He must be in the same boat; while having vision to rescue fellow captives.

For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. ² He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. (Hebrews 5)

Ezekiel can relate to living in an alien culture, away from home. Now he takes a step further and brings the living word into his body...essentially becoming a temple of God's word. We do not have to conjure up power; because God is a lion. Just take him into yours mind and body. Eating food involves breaking things down into their finest components to gain value from it. Jesus is also called the bread from heaven; because we gain life from him. Eating is compared to bible study. Bible meditation is known as dividing the word. Whatever is not chewed on is more likely to just pass through. The Jews believe that you become one with a person when you break bread with them. Our cells are replaced by nutrients gained from food. That loaf of bread is converted into parts of our body. Like a loaf of bread, the bible has to be chewed on over and over.

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. ¹⁶ But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. (2 Timothy 2)

Does our quiet time in the word look like this? Are we breaking down the word into its essential components? Do you look for context of the book, the writer, or the historical details? Do we break down the transliterations to really understand the truest meaning of key words with Blue Letter Bible, or some other interlinear?

Do we understand the cultural context? Do we compare scripture with other scripture? We should do all of these things. Do we pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal the hidden truths? Does the scripture make sense in light of similar teachings elsewhere in scripture? It should. God never contradicts himself.

The word of God is simple enough for anyone to grasp. It is built upon basic concepts. These ABCs of the faith (sin, salvation, repentance, holiness, etc...) are referred to as the milk of scripture.

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; ²⁰ knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹ for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1)

The more detailed concepts are referred to the meat of scripture. Churches like Harvest Christian Fellowship are known for being focused on evangelism and fundamental faith basics for new believers. Maturing believers need to dive into the deeper things of God as well. Going to church can be like attending school in a one-room schoolhouse. You can hear things over and over that you are already familiar with. Every mixed multitude has beginners and more mature saints. You can warm up to more detailed concepts as you master the fundamentals of the faith. Isaiah was criticized for teaching the word in a very basic format. The proud might tune out. To learn, we have to be willing to rehearse the fundamentals.

“Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? ¹⁰ For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little.” (Isaiah 28)

There are other places in scripture where scripture is eaten. In this case, it is sweet to the mouth. That is always the case. It is enjoyable to take in; but it can also cause heartburn and an upset stomach afterwards. Heaven is full of good news and power and love and holiness and excitement. That is always a blessing to take in. The rub comes from life at ground level. The earthly realities are a disaster. It is like the story of Lion King before the return of the King. People are not living by these original blessed concepts. If you experiment away from God's love for your fellow man, you merge into a weaponized culture, full of criticism and malicious intent. To be agnostic to your fellow man is to hate in by failing to respond to his needs. It's not o.k. to turn your back on a dying culture...just because we hate sin. Jesus taught us not to be like that. If you remove a love for God with a love for self, you have a world full of narcissists and anarchy. That is ultimately upsetting

and can make you feel ill. We were made to be healers. Good healers must be surviving patients ourselves.

So I went to the angel and said to him, "Give me the little book." And he said to me, "Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth." (Revelation 10)

It is exciting to see prophecy fulfilled in the newspaper headlines; but it is tragic and a great loss of life as well. We should not cheer when we read about Hamas getting destroyed; but is very interesting to see what happens to the enemies of God's people.

We are not to use scripture as a breaking hammer. It is medicine to the sick. The Bible has to be taught clearly and accurately in a way that people can grasp it. Ezekiel is told that he will be preaching to people in their native tongue. If this is the case, why do some Catholics teach the mass in Latin? Only doctors understand this forgotten language. It is like a secret code that only priests can break. It elevates the role of the priest to be in between God and man. It turns the priest into a quasi-Jesus substitute. It effectively forces the people to have to go through a priest to hear the word. This is the opposite of what God wants. It is an open banquet.

"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price." ² Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. (Isaiah 55)

The Catholic Church claims that the Latin mass is done out of a greater reverence to God. I suppose that the less you understand something the more likely that it has mysterious meanings...??? It is like the Jews who would only abbreviate God's name for so long that we don't know for sure what it is! **This is not God's will.** The Catholic Church authorities had fears that *unauthorized* versions of scripture would potentially be used. God does not need lawyers and police to patrol access to his kingdom. The Catholics only had one authorized version. This error has resulted in a version of the Bible that includes unscriptural apocryphal concepts that adds confusion; such as the use of magic, works-righteousness, praying for the dead, inaccurate historical dates, etc... It is exactly what happened to the well-intentioned Pharisees.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ² And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all

*faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.
(1 Corinthians 13)*

The Catholics took this concept so far that they effectively began doing the work of the devil:

Pope John X in 920 banned the Slavic translation of the Bible. In 1234 the Council of Tarragona banned all Romantic language bibles. In 1409, at Arundel, the English Bible was banned. Individual Bible reading was discouraged until 1896, by Pope Leo XII. Catholics were not encouraged to have their own bible until 1943, under Pope Pious XII.

These sins are upon the Catholic church's Popes and priests. In this chapter, the word is clear and comprehensible. Ezekiel has no such restrictions. Just don't mess it up by making it more exotic. God is presenting something that is easy to understand. This is why all Bible studies encourage the members to do their own study before the actual group study. There is a diminished benefit to just show up and take someone's word for what is being said. We are all supposed to dine on the meat of scripture freely.

Read Ezekiel 3:8-11: Ezekiel is being prepared to put out the powerful message, but the people are living contrary in willful rejection. It's force against force. Now what? Should Ezekiel quit, because it is an assignment destined to fail? No. That is just the limitations of the flesh. This is where Jeremiah left off. We cannot get past our fallen nature. It is a sin magnate.

For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death..... Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. ¹³ Has then what is good become death to me?... For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. ... So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. (Romans 7)

Ezekiel had to get to a spiritual plane, in plain sight of Jesus. He is our lighthouse to all who are adrift and lost at sea. This generation is something that Jesus is going to have to fix. It is only a supernatural spiritual solution.

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷ Because the

carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (Romans 8)

There is no way around the conundrum of saving a sinful race. We feel like enablers helping those who have self-defeating behavior. That is the Old Testament message. Time to turn the page. That is why God sent the gospel in his son. It is as if God is saying, "Now for something new". If we have learned anything over the past 20+ years of Saturday bible studies, that man is pretty impossible to save...without some kind of miracle. This is why Ezekiel's life is actually and unexpectedly interrupted by something that breaks the pointless cycle of death and destruction. It is a message from God. It is something new and strange, with an unexplainable power. Human limitations are no longer relevant. God can solve all of our impossible dead-end problems. If Jeremiah taught us anything, it taught us that mankind is just not going to make it. The Bible teaches us that all of God's historical resets are only temporary. At some point he has to push out of the way and do it himself on our behalf. God had to keep starting over to preserve mankind. This included the flood, starting over with Abram, the Exodus, the endless cycle of invasion-repentance-and relaxation into personal interests, etc...

Functional Witness

Ezekiel is given a gift in the form of a personal characteristic from God, for God's glory. For some, they are given the gift of eloquence, or the ability to love the unlovable, or the gift of wisdom. Ezekiel was born with another interesting gift. He was born with a hard head. Our gifts and skills can be a Siamese Twin to a related weakness. For example, I feel like I can spot insincerity at first meeting. That is a sin to me for people I judge at first glance. It is a gift for protecting my family and myself from wolves in sheep's clothing. It is like the Holy Spirit gives me a bad vibe.

Having a hard head is to have resolve to continue despite contrary opinion. It is the ability to stick to your guns when societal norms cast you as a wierdo. Not caring what people think can be a strength or a weakness. It is a necessity to not get pulled off of our scriptural foundation by our drifting culture. Our society tries very hard to create an identity crisis to believers.

For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. (James 1)

Prophets generally worked alone. Ezekiel is like a plow, breaking up hard ground. He is God's tool, who has to be unswerving and very different. Holiness is being different and not fitting in. We tend to equate ministry success with volume conversions and good works. Sometimes it can be taking your stand and facing the music without any immediate progress.

Read Ezekiel 3:12-15: People have referred to God's awesome chariot. We read earlier in Ezekiel that the cherubim angels have something like a massive and intimidating Ferris Wheel component like spinning rims, and connected perpendicular spinning rims. Visualize a massive Ferris Wheel on fire spinning rapidly with unbelievable power and speed. It all probably looks like a large, fiery chariot. They sound like a huge army marching when they move.

The chariots of God are myriads, thousands upon thousands; The Lord is among them as at Sinai, in holiness. (Psalm 68:17)

For behold, the Lord will come in fire And His chariots like the whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire. (Isaiah 66)



The appearance of heavenly lightning comes from cherubim angels. The sound of voices like thunder comes from the Seraphim angels. The whole ride-along experience left Ezekiel speechless for a week. Like Paul visiting heaven, Ezekiel hits a sensory overload as he sees the things of heaven.

Read Ezekiel 3:16-27: After Ezekiel regained his composure, a week later, he continues to be briefed. He is told by God that his position is to be a watchman over the house of Israel. He is the herald and the early warning system. Next, God takes him from the River Chebar, to the plain. He put himself in front of Ezekiel, and told him to go into his own house. God warned Ezekiel that men would come and tie him up...and he would not be able to say a word. Then God will un-mute him, and he can just say what God tells him to. Like Jesus, Ezekiel has seen the glory and power and wisdom; and has to lie down and receive what the Father has planned for his mission.

This is part of our faith walk. We are citizens of heaven who have seen the light. We too have to get dirty and be imbedded in this falling culture.