

Message #5**Ezekiel 3:1-15**

I believe that what is happening in most churches today will, not should enrage and anger one who is truly in tune with the Spirit of God. Most churches are not after a careful understanding of all the words that are found in the Word of God. Most churches are not too serious about carefully understanding the books of the Bible.

Most have actually changed the dynamic of the church to be user-friendly or seeker friendly. However, the idea that church is to be a place that is designed to lure in and entertain the people is foreign to the Word of God and grieving to the Spirit of God and it should make us angry. The primary objective of the church should be to carefully and accurately preach God's inspired Word, every bit of it, every word of it. When this is not happening, God's Spirit-led people should be enraged.

What we get to see here in Ezekiel is a true Spirit-led ministry of a true prophet of God. On two specific occasions in this text, it is stated that this was all carried out by the Spirit of God (**3:12, 14**). So what we really get to see here is a God-ordained, Spirit-led ministry in the life of Ezekiel. What we see is this:

EZEKIEL WAS ENRAGED AND ANGERED BY THE FACT THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT TAKE GOD'S WORD SERIOUSLY EVEN THOUGH HE HAD BEEN COMMANDED BY GOD TO CAREFULLY TAKE IN THE WORD OF GOD AND ACCURATELY COMMUNICATE GOD'S WORDS TO ISRAEL.

The people of God were not serious about understanding the Word of God and when Ezekiel learned this, it made him angry. This is a Spirit-produced anger. When God's people are not serious about understanding God's Word, it angers God. This is not just some different ministerial philosophy; this angers God.

As we come to this text, we cannot help but observe the amount of times that Ezekiel is addressed by God as "son of man" (**3:1, 3, 4, 10**). Ezekiel is a real man on a Divine mission. His mission is to take the Word of God to Israel even though they don't want it.

MESSAGE #1 – Ezekiel is commanded by God to eat the scroll. **3:1-3**

Ezekiel is not told to eat a history book or a psychology book or a sociology book or a philosophy book; he is told to eat the Word of God.

The scroll is symbolic for the Word of God and specifically this scroll contains serious judgment data concerning much that will happen to Israel in the Tribulation. We know from Ezekiel 2:10 that this scroll contained written data concerning "lamentations, mourning and woe." These are not real positive words he is digesting.

The Apostle John is told to eat the scroll in Revelation 10:9-11 and it clearly is connected to what is about to happen to Israel (Rev. 11-14).

Carefully observe from **verse 2** that Ezekiel was fed the scroll by God. God is the One who feeds His people. Understanding God's Word is a true gift and blessing of God.

God tells Ezekiel in **verse 3** that Ezekiel is to feed on it and fill his body with it. In other words, his job is to be totally and completely saturated with the Word of God. Somehow many ministers today have missed this. Ezekiel was not to fill his mind with psychology or philosophy or men's traditions or regulations; he was to be totally and completely filled with God's Word.

According to **verse 3** as Ezekiel took in the Word, the scroll was sweet as honey to Ezekiel. Remember, Ezekiel is taking in the Word of God that deals with serious judgments. But it was sweet to him because it is the Word of God. All Scripture is profitable and when one is in tune with the Holy Spirit, one will love all the Word of God.

The job of Ezekiel was to take in the Word of God to the full. He was to feed on every bit of the Word of God and in order to do that He must depend on God because God is the One who permits one to understand His Word.

The Word of God is sweet to the servant of God. Even though the Word of God contains negatives, those too are sweet to the man of God. Jeremiah, who has been called the weeping prophet, said, "Thy words were found and I ate them and thy words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart" (Jer. 15:16).

We need to be individuals and a church that feeds on the Word of God. We need to carefully and accurately understand God's Word—all of it and every bit of it. What we will discover is that this pursuit will be sweet to us and will be a great joy to our hearts.

MESSAGE #2 – Ezekiel is commanded by God to speak God's Word. **3:1b, 4-6**

Ezekiel's job was not just to take in the Word of God, but he also was to speak it specifically to Israel. God's Word is for God's people. God's Word is to be spoken to God's people. God's Word is to be taught to God's people.

What Ezekiel was to speak was God's "words," plural (**v. 4**). God has revealed Himself through written words and it is the job of the man of God to communicate those words to God's people.

Now God brings out certain things about the audience to whom he was to speak:

Fact #1 - He was to speak to Israel. **3:1b, 4**

His job is not to speak to the Babylonians or Egyptians or Iranians or Medes and Persians; his job is to speak to the "house of Israel."

Now carefully observe what he was to speak to Israel: “**My words.**” This is so important. The job of Ezekiel is not to preach his opinions or convictions or meditations. His job was not to teach his feelings or sensations. His job was to proclaim the very “words” of God.

Now he was to do this to Israel. His job is not to try and lure in the heathens by coming up with some novel idea of entertainment or marketing. His job was to teach the very “words” of God to the people of God. The emphasis here is that Ezekiel was to take God’s specific Word to God’s specific people.

Fact #2 - He was not being sent to foreign people. **3:5-6**

God’s people need to know the Word of God. Ezekiel was not being sent to people who spoke some foreign language. He was being sent to His own people and his job was to clearly speak to those people so they can listen and understand His Word.

Now this is critical. Ezekiel would proclaim the truth of God’s Word in plain and simple language so if the people did not respond to it, it would not be because they could not understand.

Israel would not be able to use as an excuse that they didn’t understand the message because Ezekiel would proclaim the very words of God in plain and simple language they could easily understand.

This would be one odd ministry. He was being sent to a people who could clearly understand God’s Word in their own language, but they would treat God’s Word as if it were a foreign language.

MESSAGE #3 – Israel will not listen to Ezekiel’s message from God. **3:7-11**

Ezekiel’s job was to carefully communicate the Word of God but God tells him they will not be willing to listen to you. In other words, you go and communicate the Word of God to the people and they will not respond to you.

God says don’t expect wonderful and dramatic results from your kind of ministry. Careful and accurate teaching and preaching God’s Word does not win popularity contests.

In fact, God says in **verse 7**, the whole house of Israel is stubborn and obstinate. They won’t be interested in even listening to you. In fact, “the whole house of Israel” won’t listen to you. The religious leaders, the political leaders, the judicial leaders of Israel are not really interested in Me or My Word and they won’t listen to you.

This was some kind of assignment. This was some kind of religious congregation. Who would even want this job? Who would want this ministry?

But here is what every believer needs to know; people's response doesn't change the responsibility. The response of the audience does not change Ezekiel's responsibility. His job was to accurately proclaim the Word of God to a stubborn and obstinate people.

When you stand for truth, often you will not be well-received; in fact, you may be ostracized and rejected. Take a stand in a classroom for creation against evolution and see where it gets you. Tell people that God created the heavens and the earth in six days and that it did not happen by some cosmic explosion over millions and millions of years and most won't rally around you. Stand up and say abortion is murder and see how popular you are. Call Islam or Mormonism or Jehovah's Witness a devilish cult that mocks Jesus Christ and you will not see too many rally around you. Tell people that if they do not believe in Jesus Christ, they will burn in everlasting fire and see if people like you. Tell believers that the Charismatic movement is devilish and that the denomination they are in is not Biblical and watch the fireworks.

Ezekiel's job was a tough one; he was to take the truth of God's Word to Israel even though they would not listen. God knew that to do this job, Ezekiel would need special strength.

So in order to help Ezekiel carry out this difficult ministry, God said to Ezekiel, I am making you as hard as they are (3:8-9). God says I will make you the antithesis of them. In other words, they are hard in their rebellion and I have made you just as tough and as hard as they are in proclaiming My truth.

In fact, in **verse 9**, God says I will make you "like emery harder than flint." Flint was the hardest stone in Palestine. This was the stone that was made for making knives (i.e. Josh. 5:2-3).

What God is basically telling Ezekiel is you will be tough enough to do this job because I am making you tough enough. God is telling Ezekiel you will be strong enough and determined enough to do this job because I am making you this.

The idea of God hardening something is an important theological concept. God hardens and strengthens and softens whomever He wants and whatever He wants.

Israel was in hard-hearted rebellion, but God's prophet would have a strength and boldness and enablement that would take them head on and straight up.

MESSAGE #4 – Ezekiel is commanded by God to take in God's Word in his heart. **3:10**

Notice again the emphasis on taking in the Word of God. God stresses "all My words." All of the words that God gives are to be taken to heart, not just taken into his head. The job of Ezekiel is to take in God's Word carefully and closely and proclaim it.

This clearly shows that the job of the minister is to very carefully and closely examine the very words that make up the sentences that God has given. Most of the faulty religious views come from men who are not doing their jobs.

There are ministers today who are doing very shoddy work. They are not taking in “all” of God’s Word. They are not feeding on God’s Word. They are not carefully studying and closely analyzing God’s Word and they are not accurately proclaiming God’s Word and one day when they get before God, they will be ashamed. They will be totally and completely ashamed. Those aren’t my words, those were Paul’s (II Tim. 2:15).

MESSAGE #5 – Ezekiel is commanded to speak all of God’s Word whether they listen or not.
3:11

Response of an audience should never change the message of the minister. His job is to proclaim God’s Word accurately regardless of audience response.

After God had given Ezekiel this assignment, God’s Spirit lifted him up to give him the strength and ability to carry it out.

In **verses 12-15**, the Spirit of God literally took Ezekiel to the exiles at Tel-abib, to whom he was to preach. This was the same Spirit connected to the Living Beings from the Throne of God. This same Holy Spirit was now enabling and empowering Ezekiel to do his job.

Ezekiel was not happy about this assignment. In fact, he was “overwhelmed.” In fact, his spirit was enraged because God’s own people did not want to hear God’s Word. When God’s Spirit took charge of Ezekiel, he had the same rage and anger that God had toward rebellious Israel. He could not imagine that God’s own people did not want to hear God’s Word. But the hand of the Lord was strong on Ezekiel. He was God’s man for this job.

The Apostle Paul predicts that as we near the end of the Church Age, the time will come when religious people will not endure sound doctrine. They have a religious itch they want scratched and there are plenty of ear-tickling ministers who will scratch the itch. They will actually turn away their ears from hearing truth. But the assignment of the minister is to preach the Word (II Tim. 4:1-4).

Frankly what is happening in many churches today should make us angry. We should be enraged with people who are going to church and they are not serious about carefully understanding all the words of God. This should make us angry.