

Ezekiel 2 & 3

Dr. Micheal Pardue
November 21, 2024
CRBA Pastor's Conference

Introduction – Ezekiel is called by God to proclaim the Word of God to the people of Israel who are in captivity. He sees an extraordinary vision in chapter one and this vision causes him to fall on his face (1:28). But the Lord tells him to stand and listen. He is sent to the people of Israel; called to proclaim, “Thus says the Lord.” Ezekiel’s calling is his own. Ours is likely not just like it. However, we do see characteristics of being called that we should recognize are not just for Ezekiel or some other prophets of the Old Testament or the New. We see in these two chapters of Ezekiel, **6 Characteristics of those called out to Proclaim the Good News of Christ.**

1. **The empowerment of the called is the Holy Spirit (vv. 2:1-2; 3:12-14)** – When Ezekiel is on his face, unable to stand, the Spirit enters him and sets him on his feet (2:2). The Spirit lifts him up and he hears the voice of the great earthquake (3:12). It is later that the Spirit takes him where he needs to go. The Spirit is the power of those called by God. They do not work or speak in their own power. They are powerless until filled with the Spirit.
2. **The message of the called is “thus says the Lord” (vv. 2:4; 3:11; 3:27)** – At least 126 times we find this phrase throughout this book. Ezekiel, it is made clear, doesn’t speak in this book, the Lord speaks. Ezekiel communicates what the Lord says. This is the message of the called. Thus says the Lord. Over and over and over again. The called do not have their own message, they simply proclaim the message of the Lord.
3. **The commitment of the called is to resist fear of man (vv. 2:6; 3:9b)** – Ezekiel is told that those who are to be his audience are a rebellious people and with that will come times when he might be afraid of their response. The Lord tells him to not be afraid of their words or dismayed at their looks. They will be like briars and thorns and scorpions to him. He should still not fear. Those called are not afraid of their audience. Ezekiel is going to his own people (3:5) and they will not listen, but he is not to fear them. The called must stand boldly. It will be difficult at times. The audience may attempt to claim the livelihood or even the life of the called, but the called stand without fear.
4. **The action of the called is to eat the book (vv. 2:8-3:3; 3:10)** – The called must not rebel but eat the book. Ezekiel is reminded that though those he is speaking to are rebellious, that will not be his action. He will, instead, eat the book. The people of Israel have been given the book, but did not eat.

He will consume the book, and it will be to him as sweet honey. The called consume the book. The called digest every word that God has given and as they do, and the sweet honey of God touches their mouth, the rebellion of their hearts is put to death and the heart of stone becomes a heart of flesh. The called live in fellowship with God, not rebellion against God.

5. The dedication of the called is to preach the Word even if no one listens (vv. 2:5; 2:7; 3:11)

– Ezekiel would likely not see a return on his life's investment. Much like Isaiah is told in Isaiah 6:11-13 preach though they are not listening. He is to preach "*whether they hear or refuse to hear*" (2:5, 2:7, 3:11). Some will listen. That is a great encouragement. The called understand that. Some do listen. Some come to faith. Some turn from sin. Some follow Christ. But some wont. Maybe most wont. The called continue to preach "thus says that Lord" even if they do not find that many are listening. It took Adoniram Judson six years to see his first convert in Burma.¹ What if he given up because nothing was happening? Was his calling to save? No, his calling was to preach the Good News. The called do not waiver from that dedication.

6. The disposition of the called is long-suffering with stubbornness (vv. 2:3; 3:4-9a)

– Ezekiel was called to a stubborn people; the called of God often are. All those trapped in sin are stubborn in their hard heartedness. The called must, therefore, have a disposition of stubbornness but not toward our sin or our desires, but in long-suffering with those who are stubborn toward the Good News that is preached. We need not even look to Ezekiel and his constant proclamation of "thus says that Lord." We need only to look at our Heavenly Father and his long-suffering with us to understand that if we are called, our disposition is to suffer long with those who are stubborn toward the Gospel. Might their come a time to shake the dust off our feet and move on, certainly, but not without much long-suffering for the sake of Christ.

Challenge – "this calling, as it does with those called to the the prophetic ministry causes him grief" (*Ezekiel*, Ralph H. Alexander, p. 764) (3:14-15). It is the common response. The mission Ezekiel is called to will be unrewarding. Many will not listen. They are stubborn and hard hearted. But he is to press on in the calling. He was to remember, "God's word could not fail. A remnant would obey Him and through them He would bless His people and the world." (*The Book Ezekiel*, Charles R. Erdman, p. 24). We embrace the characteristics of the called, understanding the Lord is in control. Let come what may! We belong to Jesus, so live out your calling.

¹ <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/six-years-no-converts>