

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Ezekiel: Effective Ministry To The Spiritually Rebellious Part III: God's Equipping Of His Messenger To A Very Rebellious People (Ezekiel 3:1-27)

I. Introduction

- A. Ministering to a very spiritually hard, rebellious people is a humanly overwhelming task, but God at times actually directs some of His servants to function in such a ministry.
- B. However, God equips His servants to function well in such callings by actually **dominating** their every move, **forcing** them to be and to do **exactly** what God desires, what Ezekiel experienced according to Ezekiel 3:1-27.
- C. We view this passage for insight and application in ministering in our era (as follows):

II. God's Equipping Of His Messenger To A Very Rebellious People, Ezekiel 3:1-27 ESV.

- A. To minister to a rebellious people, God told Ezekiel to accept His message of judgment as being good, v. 1-3:
 - 1. The Lord told Ezekiel to eat the scroll revealed in his prophetic vision that had words of judgment written all over it, both within as well as without the scroll, Ezekiel 3:1 with Ezekiel 2:8-10.
 - 2. When Ezekiel ate the scroll at God's command, he found that it tasted sweet as honey, indicating that the message of judgment, although negative, was wholesome and desirable, Ezekiel 3:2-3.
- B. To minister to a rebellious people, God hardened Ezekiel's resolve to minister God's Word to them, v. 4-11:
 - 1. The Lord repeatedly informed Ezekiel that his audience would be a very rebellious one, Ezekiel 3:4-7.
 - 2. God thus said He would make Ezekiel's face and forehead as hard as that of his hearers, that He would harden Ezekiel's attitude to counter the evil attitude of his hearers, Ezekiel 3:8-9. Ezekiel was thus not to fear them nor be dismayed at their looks, for the people were spiritually rebellious, Ezekiel 3:10-11.
- C. To minister to a rebellious people, God forcibly physically sent Ezekiel to them, Ezekiel 3:12-15:
 - 1. God then forcibly lifted Ezekiel up, and backing him with His divine power and the glory, sent Ezekiel away in bitterness of spirit over the difficulty of his future ministry due to Israel's hardness, Ez. 3:12-14a.
 - 2. Nevertheless, God's powerful hand was upon Ezekiel, so when he ended up with the Jewish exiles by the Chebar Canal in Babylon, Ezekiel sat beside them, feeling overwhelmed by the difficulty of his calling and also by the equally powerful hand of the Lord upon him directing him to his ministry, Ezekiel 3:14b-15.
- D. To minister to a rebellious people, God warned Ezekiel to give His message or suffer discipline, Ez. 3:16-21:
 - 1. After he sat by the exiles for seven days, God told Ezekiel He had made him a watchman for the house of Israel, that he was to warn the wicked about God's impending judgment that they might repent to avoid it or Ezekiel would suffer God's discipline for failing to serve thus as a watchman, Ezekiel 3:16-18.
 - 2. This watchman duty required that Ezekiel warn the wicked to repent (Ezekiel 3:16-19) and the righteous not to sin (Ezekiel 3:20-21), with failure to warn in either case resulting in Ezekiel's capital punishment!
- E. To minister to a rebellious people, God forcibly restrained Ezekiel's every move to do His will, Ez. 3:22-27:
 - 1. The Lord had Ezekiel once again be exposed to His glory in Ezekiel 3:22-23, causing Ezekiel to fall on his face as had occurred in his initial call to the prophetic ministry back in Ezekiel 1:28b.
 - 2. The Holy Spirit once again entered Ezekiel to cause him to stand up in God's glorious presence, and God then commanded Ezekiel to go and shut himself in his house, Ezekiel 3:24. God indicated that He would thus forcibly cause Ezekiel not to go out among the people, to avoid fellowship with them, Ezekiel 3:25.
 - 3. Also, the Lord said He would make Ezekiel unable to speak to the people until He opened his mouth, and what Ezekiel was then to utter was God's Word, Ezekiel 3:26a. The spiritual rebelliousness of the people would necessitate God's strict controls over Ezekiel in such matters, Ezekiel 3:26b-27.

Lesson: *In a very difficult ministry to a very spiritually hard, rebellious people, God dominated Ezekiel, causing him to accept as good God's message of judgment and warning him to speak the truth to avoid divine discipline while forcibly controlling Ezekiel's attitude, physical movements and even his capacity to speak.*

Application: *(1) If God calls us to minister to very spiritually hard, rebellious people, (a) may we accept as good even negative messages God wants us to communicate, (b) may we speak God's truth to avoid divine discipline and (c) understand God will forcibly control our attitude, physical movements and capacity to speak that we might achieve His will that surpasses what we humanly have the ability to achieve. (2) If we experience overwhelming spiritual hardness and are moved within to have extremely strong attitudes, motivations regarding our movements or even capacity to speak or not to speak, may we realize that GOD is involved IN us and simply YIELD to His will.*